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THE  
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OF  
ELOCUTION  
BY  
ALFRED  
AYRES

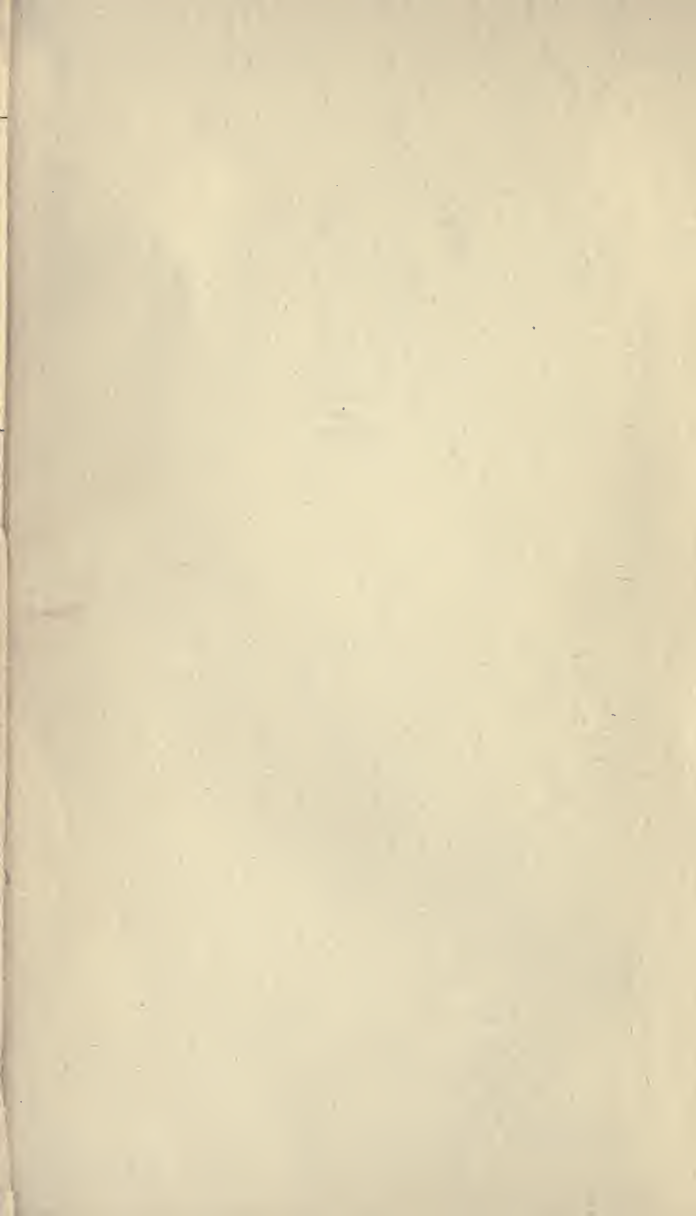
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GENERAL











**ALFRED AYRES AS SHYLOCK.**

(AFTER WILLIAM EDGAR MARSHALL'S PAINTING.)

Shylock, after the loss of his daughter, his jewels and his ducats, goes through the streets half crazed, bewailing his misfortunes, when suddenly he is halted by Solanio with : How, now Shylock?

# THE ESSENTIALS OF ELOCUTION

BY

*Thomas Embury Oliver*

ALFRED AYRES *Frank*

AUTHOR OF "THE ORTHOËPIST," "THE VERBALIST,"  
"THE MENTOR," "ACTING AND ACTORS," ETC.

NEW AND MUCH ENLARGED EDITION

Art is the perfection of nature.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE  
The perfection of art is to conceal art.—QUINTILIAN



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GENERAL

## PREFACE.

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THIS is the shortest treatise on the Art of Reading that has ever been written in the English language ; yet, short as it is, it is of more practical value than are all the others—which is not saying much in its praise, for all the others are of no practical value whatever.

The mode of procedure herein recommended, in order to become skilled in elocution, is wholly unlike anything that has hitherto found its way into print. Yet what is here is older than the oldest of the venerable “systems” that have come down to us from former generations, for what is here dates back to the time when men began to exchange ideas by means of a spoken language. Then, as ever, the sensible man—spoke he his own language or that of another—spoke naturally, and not as the elocution of the books, and of most teachers of the art, would have us speak, for that tends to make only bow-wowers and sing-song-ers.

ALFRED AYRES.

NEW YORK, March, 1886.



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## NOTE.

It has been intimated that this little book owes its success to the exceeding modesty of its preface. I do not think so; I think it owes its success to the fact that it is just the sort of book its preface says it is.

The matter I have added—An Essay on Pulpit Elocution, A Plea for the Intellectual in Elocution, The Pause—Its Importance, and A Critical Analysis of Canon Fleming's reading of certain passages in Shakespeare—will make the book much more instructive, provided the student take the trouble to decide how far I am right in criticizing the learned Canon. These pages offer such a field for the practice of mental gymnastics as is seldom met with. Elocutionists can not, I am confident, be better employed than in studying them.

ALFRED AYRES.

NEW YORK, June, 1897.





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THE

## ESSENTIALS OF ELOCUTION.

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ELOCUTION is the art of speaking language so as to make the thought it expresses clear and impressive.

This is best done by speaking the language as we should speak it if the thought were ours, and the language came to us as we give it utterance.

If the thought were ours, and we *extemporized* the language to express it, we should never fail to speak with "good accent and good discretion;" we should never fail to speak naturally and intelligently, and consequently impressively.

If this is true—and who will question it?—then the first, the most important

thing to be attended to by the reader is to make himself acquainted with the author's thought. If he does not do this, and do it thoroughly too, good reading is impossible—ay, though he may be the most learned of the learned in orotunds, sostenutos, whispers and half-whispers, monotones, basilar tones, and guttural tones, high pitches, middle pitches, low pitches, and all the rest of that old trumpery that has made many a noisy, stilted reader, but never an intelligent, agreeable one. He that understands and appreciates his author will *instinctively* know what tone to read him in; a knowledge of gutturals and basilar, of pitches and whispers, will help him not a whit. This complicated old machinery does not, never has, and never will make anything but mechanical readers—readers that, instead of being occupied with the thoughts of their authors, are occupied with the sound of their own voices, which is fatal

to the object the reader has in view—that of interesting his auditors.

Opening at random a treatise recently published entitled “Philosophic Elocution,” I find in the chapter headed “Qualities of Voice” the following: “It [the aspirate] is an impure quality, akin to the guttural and whisper, coming as it were between them, and next in attenuated quality to the latter. It means, properly, ‘sound emitted in rough breathings’ or hissings, and is necessary as expressive of violent passion. It then becomes comparative excellence in the interpretation of *hate, aversion, fear, anger, frenzy, horror*, and the like passions. Where these rage *intensely* the aspirate added to the guttural, still further corrupting and vitiating the orotund or fundamental voice, gives thereto that *vicious, fiendish character* expressive of *dire revenge* and *destructiveness*, which are otherwise inexpressible. This quality

of voice may be created as follows: Raise the tongue at the root, high toward the palate, obstructing as much as possible the passage ; contract and close the GLOTTIS still more than in guttural tones ; make strong effort to obstruct the egress of air, while with strongest pressure of abdominal dorsal and pectoral muscles it is forced out through the closed glottis and obstructed passage. Thus, while uttering the words, there will be an escape of air which is not converted into speech, but, driven out with utmost force, accompanies it with *harsh* and *hissing sound*. This is the aspirate as used in the interpretation of the malignant passions."

It is strange that intelligent persons can be persuaded to believe that this kind of "philosophy" ever has assisted any one to become a reader ! It is this kind of philosophy that has justly brought the professional elocutionist into great



disrepute with the members of the dramatic profession, who will tell you that they have never seen a student of elocution that could act, that they are always unnatural, and consequently unsympathetic, and yet the facts are :

1st. There can be no good acting without good elocution.

2d. Without much study, and in the right direction, there can be no good elocution.

3d. There is no art that can be taught with more success than elocution.

The actor himself becomes a student of elocution the moment he asks himself how a single sentence should be spoken. Elocution teachers, as a class, undoubtedly do more harm than good ; their teaching is commonly much worse than no teaching at all, but that is not the fault of the art.

Reading is a difficult art, far more difficult than most persons imagine. There

is no art for which a natural aptitude is more necessary. There are many good musicians to one good reader, and many good judges of music to one good judge of reading. In the reader sound and fury are accepted, by most persons, as art, and are applauded accordingly. I have heard but two readers—three, if I count Fanny Kemble—that I should be willing to put in the very first rank. These two were Mr. Edwin Forrest and Miss Charlotte Cushman. There is, as far as I know, no reader now before the public to be compared with them. Of course I have not heard them all, and, then, opinions differ. Neither Mr. Forrest nor Miss Cushman ever left anything to chance, to inspiration, that could be settled beforehand—not an emphasis, not an inflection, not a pause. All was carefully considered, and for everything they did they had a reason.

I would walk farther and give more

to hear any one read Hamlet's soliloquy on death as Mr. Forrest read it, than I would to see any living American actor play his whole repertory ; and I would walk farther and give more to hear any one read the part of Queen Catherine in Henry VIII. as Miss Cushman read it, than I would to see in her best part an actress that should embody all the excellencies of all the American actresses of to-day. Mr. Forrest and Miss Cushman were great players, and what made them great was their wonderful powers as readers, as *elocutionists*. In all else that goes to make the actor they have had many a peer. They were intellectual players, scholarly players, players that were far beyond the appreciation of the great majority of those that saw them. This lack of contemporary appreciation was especially true of the popular estimate of Mr. Forrest, whom the million were inclined to think a phys-

ical rather than an intellectual actor. Both Forrest and Cushman were close and successful students of Nature, and their delivery had in it none of the mere noise and circumstance of declamation. Their minds were ever occupied with the thought, the sentiment and spirit of their author, never with the tones they employed. They knew that if they succeeded in mastering their author, the time, the tone, the pitch, and the force best suited to the rendering of him would all take care of themselves. They knew that any other course of procedure would result in making their delivery mechanical, automatic and soulless, instead of spontaneous, realistic and impressive.

But I would not be understood to intimate that it is necessary merely to understand an author in order to read him well; I say only that a thorough study of the language to be read is the first

step to be taken, and that what follows is often comparatively easy.\* But as there is, when one is not ill, a vast difference between being well and being well, so there is a vast difference between comprehending an author and comprehending him. Most persons of any culture think they comprehend Shakspeare, yet there is quite as much difference in their appreciation of him as there is in their appreciation of, say the paintings of the great masters. How many of the readers of "The Merchant of Venice"—to take a very simple example—discover in Portia's speech in the fourth act, beginning "Tarry, Jew, the law hath yet another hold on you," that the law is specially severe when an alien attempts

\* I assume that the student of elocution knows his mother tongue sufficiently well to articulate it distinctly, and to pronounce it according to some recognized authority. Studies in articulation and pronunciation are properly preparatory to the study of elocution, as an *art*, rather than a part of it.



the life of a citizen, and would so emphasize the language as to bring out this thought? Very few, indeed, as I know by observation. I once knew an elocutionist (!) that for years had been getting \$5 an hour for teaching, and had gone over this speech again and again without discovering this peculiarity of the Venetian law, and, of course, without making it appear in the reading.

Elocution cannot be learned from books, any better than painting or sculpture can. No treatise on the art, no matter how voluminous it is, can do much more than give the learner a few hints to set him thinking and observing. After having carefully studied the language to be read—supposing that its meaning is not obvious—one should proceed to determine how it should be spoken in order to make the meaning clear :

1st. Which are the words that should be emphasized.

2d. Which the clauses that, being comparatively unimportant, should be lightly touched—slurred.

3d. Where the voice should be kept up, and where allowed to take the falling inflection.

4th. Where the pauses should be made, the longest of which are always made between the thoughts.

The tone, I insist, will take care of itself. Herein he that knows what he is reading about, he that appreciates his author, will never fail.

In order to execute well, practice, as a matter of course, is necessary, and a great deal of practice, too. In practising remember :

1st. To be chary of emphasis. Never emphasize a word unless you think the sense demands it. Emphasis being only relative stress, over-emphasis defeats its object. Do nothing without a reason. Spare the *ifs*, the *ands*, and the *buts*.



Do not come down on them as though you would annihilate them, after the fashion of many readers. The particles should generally be touched lightly.

2d. That in slurring parenthetical clauses—clauses that tell how, when, where, etc.—we make a slight pause before and after them, and speak them somewhat more rapidly and less forcibly than the rest of the text. Examples:

“Speak the speech—I pray you—as I pronounced it to you.”

“The censure of the which one must—in your allowance—overweigh a whole theatre of others.”

“This book—as you see by the title—is a pronouncing manual.”

So, too, must the particles and the pronouns, as a rule, be touched lightly, after the manner of good offhand speakers, and of cultivated persons in conversation, except when the sense requires them to be emphatic. Giving the name

sound to the particles and pronouns—which necessitates the distinct aspiration of the *h*'s of the pronouns, a thing that we hear an occasional Englishman do, seemingly to make sure of not being taken for a cockney—makes one's utterance stilted, pedantic and self-conscious. Herein some of our English actors are great offenders. There is as much difference between the proper sound to give to the pronouns and the particles in speaking and reading and their name sounds as there is between the name sound of *the* and the sound we usually give it in conversation. The primary object of reading, of reciting, and of declaiming is not to make our listeners understand the words, but to make them comprehend the thoughts the words express. The reader that sets himself the task of sending every syllable to the uttermost corners of the house is sure to be stilted, automatic, unnatural, and con-

sequently uninteresting. If every syllable reaches, so much the better, but they must be sent without apparent effort. Good taste limits clearness of articulation as well as everything else. Overdoing in articulating, as in manners, is always far more objectionable than underdoing, as nothing else is so objectionable as self-consciousness and affectation. An evident effort to be fine is a distinguishing characteristic of the underbred and the half-schooled.

3d. That great care should be taken not to let the voice die out, as many readers and players do, at the end of sentences and as the breath leaves the lungs. No other one thing is so destructive to the sense, except the old-fashioned practice of varying the tones in order to avoid being monotonous—a reproach that will never be made an intelligent reader that is intent upon keeping his auditors occupied with the thought of his author. Then

the tones will change spontaneously. If the sentiment does not change them let them remain unchanged. If the reader allows himself to be occupied with the tones of his voice, the listener will do likewise, and will soon become wearied.

This sing-song manner of delivery pervades nearly the whole German stage. The German actor, find him where you will, never, by any chance, speaks a sentence in a natural tone, save when he plays low-comedy parts. No one could be more natural than he when he personates a comic tinker or a comic cobbler ; but when he attempts the personation of a man of the better sort his delivery is artificial in the extreme. Nor need we hunt far to find, even in high places, on our own stage those that sin in this direction quite as grievously as the Germans do. This is a style of elocution that costs little labor, and makes small demands on the intelligence.

4th. That in endeavoring to be natural one must be careful not to degenerate into the commonplace. Underdoing is always worse than overdoing. The worst of faults is tameness. The happy mean between the declamatory and the commonplace is often not easy to find. This is the reason that we so rarely hear certain passages in popular plays satisfactorily spoken — Hamlet's advice to the players, for example. How beautifully, how naturally, and yet with what princely dignity Mr. Forrest used to speak these speeches !

5th. To be deliberate, to take time. But let your deliberation appear in the time you consume with your pauses—which, remember, when of much length, must be between the thoughts—and not in any drawling or dwelling on the words, for they must come clean-cut and sharply defined. Nothing else does more to make one's reading natural and



realistic than the proper distribution of time. In extemporizing we pause instinctively : to give the listener time to comprehend, and to prepare our next thought for presentation.

6th. That in speaking the language of others we should seem to be finding the thought and the language as we go along. I may say here that no one, no matter who, can do himself full justice in speaking the language of another unless he is as familiar with it as he is with his A B C's. He must know the language so thoroughly that it costs him no effort whatever to recall it.

7th. Not to commit a selection to memory until, by going over it mentally, you are able to read it mentally to your satisfaction. To memorize a selection and then study the reading is "to put the cart before the horse." First decide upon the form of the utterance, then, as you memorize, you will

memorize the form as well as the words. Salvini is said to have studied King Lear six years before he made any effort to commit the part to memory.

8th. That untutored readers are almost certain to strike a higher key in reading than that of their ordinary tone. This is a fault that a little attention will, in most cases, readily correct. An easy way to make sure of striking a natural tone is to preface what one is about to read with one or two extemporaneous sentences, and then to go directly from one's own language to that of the author. For example, thus: If you will listen I will read, for your edification, I hope, some verses by Alfred Tennyson. They are entitled "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and begin by saying that :

"When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free," etc. Nothing is easier than in this way to begin in the tone one



habitually speaks in. Then, after a little practice, one can forego the preface.

9th. To take breath often, very often, and to take it inaudibly. Leave gasping to "barn-stormers" and prayer-meeting exhorters. Never speak without having the lungs well filled. In taking breath and in speaking use the muscles of the chest as little as possible; make, if you can, the diaphragm and abdominal muscles—the belly—do all the work. Practice will make this easy, and will immensely increase the so-called lung power for both momentary and continued effort. If a speaker from nervousness loses his voice he has only "to pull himself together," take a deep, full breath, and speak from the abdomen, to find his voice instantly return to him. In exercising the voice with the view of strengthening it, it is not necessary to make much sound, but only to utter the words, or the vowels

only, with intensity. This can be done without disturbing a neighbor in an adjoining room. Voice is as much the result of muscular effort as is the turning of somersaults, and one should not expect to have the muscles with which one produces it well hardened and under proper control with less than at least two years' constant practice. No other exercise is more, if equally, invigorating. It is not necessary to have much voice in order to read well. A fragile person with a weak voice, if it is under control, might be very artistic; but a strong voice and great strength are necessary in order to be effective, especially in dealing with pathos or passion.

Advanced pupils in schools can commonly be taught with considerable success to read naturally by giving them a selection to familiarize themselves with—a short, simple story, for example—and

then asking them, first, to give the substance of the selection in their own language, and afterward the selection in the language of its author. As soon as the pupil begins to speak (or to read) in a high tone or unnaturally he should be stopped, with the question: "What did you say this is about?" which will bring him back to a natural tone. Then, after he has extemporized a few sentences, he should be directed to return to the language of the book. One hour of this kind of drill will accomplish more than a whole term of wrestling with high pitches, low pitches, basilar, guttural, orotund, and sostenuto.

If these hints suffice to make the student of elocution think and observe, they do about all that any *treatise* can do in the way of making readers. He that would acquire the art of speaking the language set down for him in an intelligent and

natural manner should study the manner of good extemporaneous speakers and of people in earnest conversation. He should observe how they emphasize—how they slur the unimportant, reserving their breath and strength for the important—and *how they pause*. Let him study himself, too, as well as others, especially if his manner is naturally earnest and animated. Whatever is even akin to a drawling, a whining, an intoning, or a canting manner of speaking he cannot too studiously shun. Natural tones are the tones of truth and honesty, of good sense and good taste. It is with them only that the understanding is successfully addressed ; with them only that we can arouse and keep awake the intelligence of the listener, which is the object we always have in view, whether we speak our own language or that of another.

The only serious objection, I believe,

to the course I recommend is that it offers comparatively little opportunity for the professor to impress his pupils, and through them the neighborhood, with his profundity. In natural, common-sense processes there is rarely anything that dazzles, never anything that bewilders.

## ADDITIONAL.

I WILL indicate, as nearly as I am able, what I conceive to be the proper reading of Portia's great speech in the fourth act of "The Merchant of Venice," giving some of the reasons for the emphasis. A careful study of this speech will give the student of elocution an idea of the course it is necessary to pursue, and of the thought required in order to determine how the more difficult authors should be read :

~ indicates that the word it is placed over should be touched lightly.

/ indicates a place where breath should be taken.

The italics indicate that the word should be emphasized.

PORTIA.—Do you confess the bond?

ANTONIO.—I do.

PORTIA.—Then must the Jew be merciful.



SHYLOCK.—On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

PORTIA.—The quality of mercy is not *strained*./

Thoughtless readers, who comprise fully forty-nine in every fifty, are sure to make either *quality* or *mercy*, or possibly both emphatic, while the thoughtful reader sees that the making of either of these words emphatic puts a meaning into the line not intended. To say that “The *quality* of mercy is not strained” is to say that some other attribute of mercy is, or may be, strained—the quantity, for example. And to say, “The quality of *mercy* is not strained” is to say that the quality of something else is, or may be, strained. The thoughtful reader sees that Portia says simply this: “Mercy doesn’t come by compulsion, it comes of itself, it is spontaneous,” and, having seen this, he has no difficulty in deciding how the line should be emphasized.

I will take occasion here to say that



when one is in doubt about the emphasis it is an excellent plan to express the thought of the author in one's own language, and then to transfer the emphasis to the language of the author; and also that when one has difficulty in speaking the language of an author naturally, that it is likewise a good plan to express the thought in one's own language, and then to transfer the intonation to the author. In doing so, in endeavoring to be natural, colloquial, one must be very careful not to degenerate into the commonplace—a very common fault. Of the two it is better to overdo than to underdo, as in underdoing there is great danger of being tame, which is the worst of faults.

It droppeth/ ẵs t̃hē gentle rain frōm heaven/  
Upon the place beneath :/ it is *twice blest* : /

The thoughtless reader, the reader that has no reason for what he does, but emphasizes in a hap-hazard fashion, is

sure to say "*twice* blest," intimating by his emphasis that it has somewhere been said in the context that mercy is once blest, as without this statement his emphasis would not be justified. We should say of a man that has been twice imprisoned, in simply stating the fact: "He has been *twice imprisoned*;" but if we were answering the question, "Has he not been imprisoned?" we should instinctively say: "Yes, he has been *twice* imprisoned." In emphasis, as in grammar, it is always the sense that determines.

It blesseth him that *gives*/ and him that *takes* :/

Strangely enough, "*him* that gives and *him* that takes" is the hap-hazard way of reading this line. If the language were, "The man that gives and the man that receives," no one would err in reading it.

'Tis *mightiest*/ in the *mightiest* ;/ it becomes

Many thoughtful readers say, " Mightiest *in* the mightiest," as they say, " Heart *of* hearts." Their reasons for so doing have always seemed to me valueless. This emphasis seems to me absurd. Portia simply says that even among the mightiest mercy is still the mightiest. In this sentence *among* is the word that should receive the stress, if in Shakespeare's mode of expressing the thought *in* should receive it.

The thronéd monarch/ better than his crown :/

This is, probably, the line of the whole speech with regard to which opinions most differ. Many good readers—among them my learned friend, Professor J. B. Roberts, of Philadelphia — insist that *better* is much the most emphatic word. They say, "All monarchs have crowns." And if they have! If it had been anywhere said that mercy becomes the thronéd monarch, *as well* as his crown,

then we should say properly that it becomes him *better* than his crown; but this is nowhere said. Portia says that the most exalted of men are more adorned by mercy than they are even by their crowns. It is not more incorrect to say, "Fame is *better* than riches," than it is to say, "It becomes the thronéd monarch *better* than his crown." Of the three words *crown* is perhaps a little the most, and *better* is certainly the least emphatic.

His *sceptre*/ shows the force of *temporal* power,/  
 The attribute to *awe* / and *majesty*,/  
 Wherein doth sit the *dread* / and *fear* of *kings* ;/

Care should be taken not to run *awe* and *majesty* and *dread* and *fear* together, as it greatly lessens the effect.

But *mercy*/ is above the *sceptred* sway ;/  
 It is enthronéd in the *hearts* of *kings*./

The pronoun *it* in this line, as will be seen, stands in direct contradistinction to *temporal power* (its antecedent

being *mercy*), which is enthroned in the sceptre ; hence the sense demands that *it* should be emphasized ; but, owing to the shortness of the vowel sound, there is something unpleasant to the ear in that reading. Substitute *that* in the place of *it*, and the effect of the emphasis is very different.

It is an attribute to God/ Himself ;/  
 And earthly power /doth then show likest God's/  
 When mercy/ seasons justice./ Therefore, Jew,/  
 Though justice be thy plea,/ consider this,/  
 That, in the course of justice,/ none of us/

Not "in the *course* of justice," as many thoughtless readers would have it. The words *the course of* are not at all necessary to the sense ; the line is fully as forcible without them.

Should see salvation./ We do pray/ for mercy ;/  
 And that same prayer/ doth teach us all/ to render  
 The deeds of mercy./ I have spoke thus much,/  
 Not "I have *spoke* thus much," which

is equivalent to saying, "I have not chanted it nor sung it."

To *mitigate* the *justice*/ of thy plea ;/  
Which,/ if thou *follow*,/ this *strict court of Venice*/

See what has been said about the slurring of parenthetical clauses.

*Must needs give sentence/ 'gainst/ the merchant there.*

The voice should be kept well up to the very end of the last line, in order to make the proper climax.

As for the measure, in reading verse, especially blank-verse, it is generally better to leave it to take care of itself. The thought is the thing; it is with that that we catch and hold the attention of the listener.

In the following speeches of Shylock I mark the pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions that I would have touched lightly. To give these little unemphatic words their full name sound, as many readers do, is most unnatural, and makes one's reading sound very like a Conos-



toga wagon going over a corduroy road. By tripping over the unimportant we bring the important into the foreground, which makes it easier for the listener to seize the thought. The reader that goes pounding over the words soon becomes tiresome. The only extemporizers that speak in this manner are those that endeavor to make up in clatter what they lack in matter.

I have possessed your grace of what I purpose ;  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.  
If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.  
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have  
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive  
Three thousand ducats :—I'll not answer that :  
But say, it is my humor : is it answered ?  
What if my house be troubled with a rat,  
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats  
To have it baned ; what, are you answered yet ?  
Some men there are love not a gaping pig ;  
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat.  
Now for your answer :  
As there is no firm reason to be rendered  
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;  
Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;



So can I give no reason, nor will I not,  
 More than a lodgéd hate and a certain loathing  
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus  
 A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

DUKE.—How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring  
 none?

SHY.—What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
 You have among you many a purchased slave,  
 Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,  
 You use in abject and in slavish parts,  
 Because you bought them: shall I say to you,  
 Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?  
 Why sweat they under their burdens? let their beds  
 Be made as soft as yours, let their palates  
 Be seasoned with such viands? you will answer,  
 The slaves are ours:—So do I answer you:  
 The pound of flesh that I demand of him  
 Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it:  
 If you deny me, fie upon your law!  
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice:  
 I stand for judgment;—answer: shall I have it?

When not emphatic the *h* in all the pronouns beginning with that letter should be touched very lightly. In conversation initial *h* is frequently dropped entirely, in the pronouns, by those whose articulation is least faulty. There are not a few, however, that, when they appear

in public and are "on their mettle," studiously avoid slurring the pronouns, and consequently are careful to aspirate the *h* distinctly in *his*, *her*, *he* and *him*, no matter whether the thought demands that the pronouns should be emphasized or not; but in their endeavor to be nicely correct they simply succeed in being pedantically wrong. This error seriously mars the delivery of many actors and public readers, making their elocution stilted and unnatural. Many of them slur *my*, not unfrequently making it *me* (*e* like *y* in *only*), in fact, when the *y* should retain its long sound; but they seem to think it would be a heinous offence to treat the other pronouns in a like manner. *Pronouns in which the letters should have their full value are met with only at considerable intervals.*

When, from being used in contradistinction to another personal pronoun, *my* is emphatic, the *y* has its full, open, long-*i*

sound. Thus we should say, "Is this *m̄y* ink or *yours*?" But when there is no such emphasis—and there is but rarely—the *y* has the sound of obscure *i*, as in *mi-nūtē* and *miraculous*, which is very like the sound of *y* in *many*, *only*, etc. "My [*me*] *ink* is as bad as my [*me*] *pen*." These rules, however, are and should be departed from in certain cases where we would express respect or emotion. "My [*m̄i*] brother shall know of this." "Sir, this lady is my [*m̄i*] wife." "Ay, madam, she was my [*m̄i*] mother!" Say *me* in these sentences, and they become commonplace; you take all the *soul* out of them.

"Hearing their [*th'r*] conversation and their [*th'r*] accounts of the approbation their [*th'r*] papers were received with, I was excited to try my [*me*] hand among them [*th'm*]."—*Franklin*.

"If *their* loss were as great as *yours*, it would bankrupt them [*th'm*]."



“ If you give *me* money, what are you going to give *them* ?”

“ If I had them [*th'm*] now, I should know what to do with them [*th'm*].”

Why did *you* not come to *me* when I called *you* ?

Though the name sounds of *you* and of *me* are *yoo* and *mee* respectively, their proper sounds in the sentence above, where they are unemphatic, is *ye* and *me*, the *e* in both cases having its obscure sound, which is the sound that terminal *y* often has—any, many, nightly—and this is the only sound ever given to these pronouns, when they do not stand in positions that make them emphatic, except by the pedantic.

The name sound of *your* is *yoor*, but when it stands in unemphatic positions, as it generally does, its pronunciation approaches that of the last syllable of the word *lawyer*.

## HAMLET'S ADVICE TO THE PLAYERS.

Speak the speech (I pray you) as I pronounced it to you, *trippingly* on the tongue. But, if you *mouth* it (as *many* of our players do) I had as lief the *town-crier* had spoke my lines. Nor do not *saw* the air too much—your hand thus ; but use all *gently* : for, in the very *torrent, tempest*, and (as I may say) the WHIRLWIND of passion, you must acquire and beget a *temperance* that may give it *smoothness*. O, it offends me to the *soul*, to hear a *robustious, periwig-pated* fellow tear a passion to *tatters*, to very *rags*, to split the ears of the GROUNDLINGS ; who (for the most part) are *capable* of nothing but inexplicable dumb *shows* and *noise*. I could have such a fellow *whipped* for o'erdoing *Termagant* ; it *out-herods Herod*. Pray you, avoid it.

PLAYER. I warrant your honor.

Be not too TAME, neither ; but let your own *discretion* be your *tutor*. Suit the *action* to the *word*, the *word* to the *action* ; with this *special observance*, that you o'erstep not the *modesty* of *nature* ; for anything so *overdone* is from the *purpose* of playing, whose *end*, both at the *first* and *now*, *was* and *is*, to hold (as 'twere) the mirror up to nature : to show *virtue* her own *feature*, *scorn* her own *image*, and the very *age* and *body* of the time his form and pressure. Now, this *overdone*, or come tardy off, though it may make the *unskilful laugh*, cannot but make the *judicious grieve* ; the censure of the which *one must* (in your allowance) outweigh a whole *theatre* of *others*. O, there *be* players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that *highly* (not to speak it *profanely*), that, having neither the *accent* of Christians nor the *gait* of Christian, *pagan*, nor *man*, have so *strutted*



and BELLOWED, that I have thought some of Nature's *journeymen* had made men, and not made them *well*, they imitated humanity so *abominably*.

SHAKSPEARE.

### HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.

To *be* or *not* to be—that is the question :  
 Whether 'tis *nobler* in the mind to *suffer*  
 The *slings* and *arrows* of *outrageous* fortune,  
 Or to take *arms* against a *sea* of troubles,  
 And, by *opposing*, *end* them—To *die*—to *sleep*—  
 No more ; and, by a *sleep*, to say we *end*  
 The *heart-ache*, and the *thousand* natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation  
*Devoutly* to be wished. To *die*—to *sleep*—  
 To *sleep*?—perchance to *dream*—aye, *there's* the *rub* !  
 For, in that sleep of *death*, what dreams *may* come  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
*Must* give us *pause* ! *There's* the respect  
 That makes *calamity* of so *long* *life* :  
 For *who* would bear the *whips* and *scorns* of time,  
 The *oppressor's* *wrong*, the *proud* man's *contumely*,  
 The *pangs* of *disprized* love, the *law's* *delay*,  
 The *insolence* of *office*, and the *spurns*  
 That patient *merit* of the *unworthy* takes—  
 When *he* *himself* might his quietus make  
 With a *bare* *bodkin* ? *Who* would *fardels* bear,  
 To *groan* and *sweat* under a *weary* life,  
 But that the dread of something *after* death—  
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns—*puzzles* the *will*,  
 And makes us rather *bear* those ills we *have*  
 Than fly to *others* that we *know* not of !

Thus *conscience* does make *cowards* of us all:  
And *thus* the *native* hue of resolution  
Is *sicklied* o'er with the *pale* cast of *thought*;  
And enterprises of *great pith* and *moment*,  
With *this* regard, their currents turn *awry*,  
And *lose* the *name* of *action*.

SHAKSPEARE.

This soliloquy should not be spoken in less than four minutes—certainly not in less than three and a half. Mr. Forrest took six minutes—never less in his later years—to speak it, and his six minutes—so fully did he engross the attention of his listeners—did not seem longer than the three minutes of many others.

So much in the way of directions! And they should suffice to set the would-be reader to thinking and observing, and to studying Nature, which it is as much his duty to copy in her best forms as it is the painter's or the sculptor's.



## DEPORTMENT.

A WORD, and only a word, with regard to deportment on the rostrum or the stage.

The first and most important thing to do is to learn to do nothing—to keep still, to stand firmly on the feet, without any dropping in the hips, letting the hands *fall where the attraction of gravitation will take them.*

Of all the positions one can take, this one is the most graceful, and it may always be held until the demands of the occasion necessitate a change. It should never be changed simply for the sake of change.

Yet it is the position least in favor with the tyro. He persists in frequently changing the position of his feet, in dropping in the hips, in putting

his hands behind his back, on his hips, or in his trousers pockets; in putting his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, or in his belt, if he wears one, or in clutching his sword-hilt, if he carries one—in short, he persists in doing everything but the right thing, which is, I repeat, to keep still in the position described.

No other one thing so quickly betrays the novice as fidgeting, and fumbling, and trying to hide the hands; and no other one thing does so much to make one appear to be master of the situation, and to make one's bearing dignified and pleasing to the eye as—repose.

If you would learn what not to do observe our younger actors—especially those that come to us from England. They—some of them, at least—would make a better figure if their arms were amputated at the shoulder.

After rising to read to, or to address, an assemblage of persons, do not be in

haste to begin. Always wait till your auditors are quite still. Your waiting with composure will never fail to impress your auditors favorably.

Be sparing with your gestures. Make but few. The tyro generally makes fully six times too many. Let those you do make be made from the shoulder. Little gestures made from the elbow are meaningless. Gesture, if spontaneous, always precedes the word. Gestures that are not spontaneous are better not made.

## PULPIT ELOCUTION.

OF the three places where we hear most public speaking and reading—our courts of law, our theaters, and our churches—the place where we hear the best elocution is the first, and the place where we hear the worst elocution is the last. The reason we hear the best elocution in our courts of law is because there the speakers are most occupied with the thoughts expressed by the language they utter, because there they are most in earnest, and because there they address themselves most to the intelligence. Mere sound produces its effect on the feelings, while reason alone reaches the intelligence.

He that habitually addresses himself to the feelings of his auditors is sure

to become artificial, while he that habitually addresses himself neither to the feelings nor to the reason of his auditors is sure to become monotonous, and, indeed, is in great danger of becoming a mere mumbler. In Methodist pulpits we find the best examples of the first class of speakers; in Episcopal pulpits, the best examples of the second.

No man's delivery can be wholly bad if he have thought to utter that is worth the uttering, if he be master of the thought—it may not always be his—and if he be intent on impressing his auditors. The extemporizer is commonly more effective than he that speaks a lesson conned, or speaks from a manuscript, simply because his mind is more fully occupied with the thought as he gives it utterance. I say commonly more effective, because it is possible for at least some persons so to cultivate the

art of delivery as to be fully as effective in the delivery of a lesson conned as they would be if the whole—thought and language—were their own. For all, however, this requires much study, and for some persons, no matter how much study they give to the art of delivery, skill is impossible. Some of our great players are probably quite as impressive in speaking the language of their parts as they would be if the thought were theirs, and the language came to them as they give it utterance. This accomplishment they acquire by availing themselves of the assistance of the best masters, and by studying Nature in her best forms. The most effective speaker of language this country has thus far produced, and one of the most effective any country has ever produced, was undoubtedly the late Edwin Forrest, who insisted that he owed even his wonderful voice to cul-



ture. Mr. Forrest was one of the hardest of hard students in his art; not a thing did he leave undone that he thought would in any degree improve his elocution. In the matter of pronunciation, for example, he was one of the most correct persons that have ever spoken the English language. Therein it was always safe to take him as a guide. Nor was he less correct in those things that it is necessary to pay attention to in order fully to bring out an author's thought. His emphasis, his pauses, and the inflections were always just what they should be to make his language impressive.

Miss Charlotte Cushman was another wonderful reader. True, Forrest and Cushman were what the world calls geniuses, but their genius, like the genius of most geniuses, was in a great measure merely a genius for close application. The Forrests and the Cush-



mans are not more indebted to their natural gifts than they are to what they acquire by study.

No man can make language thoroughly effective that has not learned how to do it; that is not studied and practiced in the art commonly called elocution, which *The Standard Dictionary* defines as "proper and effective oral delivery." One writer on the art says that elocution may be defined as simply "the intelligent, intelligible, correct, and effective interpretation and expression of thought and emotion in speech and action." Another says: "It is the appropriate utterance of the thoughts and feelings presented in written language." A definition I prefer to either of these is this: "Elocution is the art of speaking language so as to make the thought it expresses clear and impressive."

Nor is the utterance the only thing

to be considered; the handling of the body—gestures, bearing—must also be considered if one would be a pleasing speaker. Oratory is an art, and like the other arts, is largely acquirable. How many preachers know anything about what is called stage or rostrum deportment? How often they appear awkward and ungainly, when, by following a few hints, they would appear dignified and commanding!

Much importance as has been attached to the art by many persons as far back, at least, as we have the history of civilization, there is to-day one class of persons, a part of whose duties is to speak in public two or three times a week, that appear for the most part to attach no importance to it whatever. I mean the preachers. They, at least many of them, appear to care not a whit whether their delivery is good or bad. There are those that think this

comes of the fact that elocution is thought by many to make the speaker or reader unnatural and stilted. I think it may be found in the fact that many preachers are indifferent, and are content to discharge their duties in a simply perfunctory manner. If they had the burning zeal of a Paul or an Ulphilas, of a Luther or a Calvin, of a Massillon or a Whitfield, they should do all in their power to make their delivery effective. In the Methodist pulpits, for example, it is too often the fashion to vociferate—to rant, as the stage calls it—with all the physical energy the speaker chances to possess. In the Episcopal, very many go to the other extreme. There they go so far in avoiding the vociferation indulged in by their Methodist neighbors that some of them lose all semblance of being in earnest. They go through the entire service, sermon included, as

though they thought it quite "the thing" to be as monotonous and automatic as possible. The Methodist appears to think his auditors want and expect what the stage calls "ginger," so he howls himself hoarse. The Episcopalian, on the contrary, appears to think his auditors want and expect propriety, alias monotony, so he gives it to them in a tone that oftentimes is hardly audible. Yet both Methodist and Episcopalian profess to have the same mission, to teach the same truths, to be guides in the same paths. It is, or is supposed to be, the mission of both to convince; yet how differently do they go about the compassing of the object in view! And still, since there have been men to convince, they have been convinced in essentially the same way; and as long as there are any men to convince, they will be convinced in essentially the same way. That way, however, is not

the way that fashion has introduced into a great majority of the pulpits of to-day. The speakers we find in these same pulpits, when they are really intent on bringing others to see as they see, are very different in manner from the manner they assume in their pulpits. Then they talk like men. Then, they are natural. Then, the one leaves off vociferating; the other, mumbling. Then, they both leave off intoning. Then, they make a direct, earnest, honest, manly appeal to the listener.

Some speakers, I should observe, resort to vociferation, to clatter, to make up for a paucity of matter. He that has thought to present that he is really desirous to have his auditors comprehend, instinctively avoids drowning it in a sea of sound.

As I have already intimated, elocution is looked upon with disfavor by very many persons. The reason is be-



cause the so-called methods are nearly all bad, and because the self-called teachers of elocution, nineteen out of twenty of them, are worse than the methods. Elocution, however, can be taught, and taught as successfully as any other art can be taught. But, beware, you that would study the art—if there be any such—into whose hands you get.

I have no doubt that if the reading and speaking done in our churches were done really well, from a purely elocutionary point of view, the church attendance would be well-nigh double what it is. If you want people to go to church you must interest them, and you can't interest them by holloing at them, or by mumbling at them.

The success of a speaker before the average audience depends as much on the manner of the delivery as on the matter delivered.



## A PLEA FOR THE INTELLECTUAL IN ELOCUTION.

The greater number of those who think themselves elocutionists know no more about elocution than a catfish knows about astronomy.—“THESPIS” ON ELOCUTION.

THERE are a good many persons in this country that profess to occupy themselves with the art commonly, and properly, called elocution. They disagree in a good many things, but they all agree in one thing—that there are many persons in this country that will have none of them or of their art; or, to get nearer to the matter, of what they call their art.

Not a few of these artists, real or only self-called, seem to be desirous to do what they can to convince the world that elocution is a very good thing, and

hence a thing that every one would be the better for knowing something of. This ought to be an easy thing to do, since elocution is nothing else than good speaking, or perhaps it would be better to say it is good vocal delivery, which surely is a thing that no one would object to having,

There is one thing more in which all, it would seem, are fully in accord; and that is that to bring elocution "into better repute with the world," we have but to make the elocution of the elocutionists more frequently elocution. The course to pursue in order to bring this about is the question on which, it is fairly clear to the observer, no two think alike. One says: "We should be eager in our desires and work heartily," but he doesn't tell us how to work or what to work at. Another says: "You must advance or you will retrograde," but she doesn't tell us what to

do in order to advance. This same adviser adds: "I feel that the diggers of the earth who go down deep have better results than those who spend their time in displaying what they know"; but how our adviser would have us dig deep we are left to divine, hence the advice is of doubtful worth. Another says: "First of all, I think that elocution, both in teaching and in practice, will be reformed by the light of the harmonic principle."

How the harmonic principle would aid in determining just what an author would say, and just how one should emphasize, inflect, and pause in order to make an author's meaning clear, we are left to find out as best we can. Here, perhaps, we should do well to invoke the aid of the principle harmonic. This same counsellor tells us that we must be in love with the poetry we attempt to interpret, and that the

greatest thing in elocution, as in religion, is the love of God. How love of God or of poetry could possibly sharpen one's wits I cannot see. I have yet to find that the pious read any better than the impious, nor has it ever seemed to me that love for the poetic betters that discretion that Shakespeare intimates is the elocutionist's best tutor. Indeed, I have always been under the impression that poets are commonly bad readers, even of their own compositions. Love of poetry may, usually does, make the reader earnest, but unwhipped earnestness is seldom anything but fuss and fury. Then we have "The New Elocution," "The New Dynamic Reading," "The Psychological Elocution," and perhaps some other kinds of elocution that I have never heard of. Whether any one of these various kinds of elocution is likely to drag elocution out of the slough of despond, in which all

concede that it at present wallows, is a matter that I have not even an impression with regard to, as I have not even a vague idea of what these various kinds of elocution are. Philistine-like, I have been content to stick to the old sort, of which I have still much to learn. No man should attempt the new till he has mastered the old.

And then there are a good many persons who think, it would seem, that coming together and speaking some pieces to one another and clapping one another on the back and crying, Bravo, brother! and Well done, sister! whether the pieces are well spoken or not, will do something, or should do something, toward bringing elocution "into better repute with the world." This, perhaps, will do the business, but I'm skeptical; I'm afraid it won't; I don't see how it can. On the contrary, this sort of thing, it seems to me, is shaped

to do harm rather than good. There is danger that it will send the tyro home distended like the pouter-pigeon, with a misconception of his own importance, in which event he is more than ever in danger of never knowing how little he knows. Chest out and chin ahigh, he says to himself: "Ha, ha! I read before an audience of experts, and they applauded! I thought I was, now I know that I am! Halleluiah! Glory to Art in the highest!" No good can come of thinking one's self a gamecock when one is only a bantam. Commonly, we profit more by being made to see our faults than by being blinded to them. Mutual admiration societies and air-castle building are very like in what they yield.

That elocution is a good thing, since it is nothing else than "proper and effective oral delivery," no one will deny, though careless talkers often in-



veigh against elocution when, if they would reflect for a moment, they would not inveigh against the art, but against those who profess to cultivate it. The habit prevails among actors to decry elocution; the less they know the more emphatic their disapproval, yet an actor's manner of speaking, more than all else, fixes his status in his vocation. So far as we know, all great actors have not only been great elocutionists, but they were schooled in elocutionary art by teachers of high or low degree, from Mr. William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-the-Avon, to Miss Louisa A. Fangs, of New York on the Hudson.

"And you," I imagine I hear a chorus of voices ask, "have you a way to drag elocution out of the slough in which it wallows?" Oh, yes, I have a way. Whether it be like Wolsey's, a sure and safe one, I will not pretend to say. The outcome of pursuing my

way would depend much upon the intelligence employed in the pursuit.

It has ever seemed to me that elocution spreads out enormously in a direction whose domain the average elocutionist never deems it worth his while to explore, much less to cultivate. With few exceptions, so far as I have been able to judge, the now-a-day elocutionists look upon elocution as being little more than a near kin to gymnastics. They begin, continue and end with the brawn side of the art, and demean themselves, from first to last, as though having got the voice-making machine in good condition and well under control; as though, having possessed themselves of the power successfully to fire sound at words, they have done all there is to do to be an accomplished elocutionist. That elocution is an eminently intellectual art—an art the gymnastic side of which to the intellectual

side is as one to many—is something the elocutionists make haste to say they know, while their doing says they know it not.

That elocution is a highly intellectual, and, consequently, a very difficult art, we have evidence that amounts to proof in the fact that, so far as is generally known, America has produced only two readers of the first class. If this be true, as both these readers have been more than twenty years dead, it might be questioned whether or not the great majority of the present generation of elocutionists have had an opportunity to learn what good reading is. Really good reading, I am sure, would be a revelation to the majority of the more intelligent of them; the less intelligent would, perchance, remind us of the Mohawk that preferred a colored lithograph to a picture by Rubens.

To those elocutionists who contend that a course in muscle training, in voice-culture, must precede every other step in acquiring the elocutionary art; that it is useless to try to learn to read until one has trained the voice—to such elocutionists the field that the real elocutionist begins, continues, and ends with, is an unknown realm. The veritable elocutionist, the elocutionist that recognizes the importance of cultivating the intellectual side of his art, in his teaching, gives little time to voice-culture, and that little he gives grudgingly. He knows that if his pupil is in earnest, a few simple hints, a directing word now and then will suffice to enable him, little by little, to strengthen the voice-making apparatus and get it under control. He feels, he knows, that to take a pupil's time in putting him through a course of voice exercises is to receive without making an equit-

able return. He knows that the pupil can exercise and develop the voice-making muscles perfectly well without his immediate aid. Teachers that spend time in vocal culture are of the sort that contrive to make as many bites of the cherry as possible ; that are ever intent on making the little they know go as far as they can ; that are always studying to make the simple appear complex. The few things a reader has to do, in order to read well, offer difficulties so great that none ever attain to excellence but those who supplement natural aptitude with long and careful study. I would not be understood to intimate that the gymnastic elocutionists are dishonest. To censure them for not knowing what they never have had an opportunity to learn, or even to know the existence of, obviously would be unfair. Few of us ever see anything that is not pointed out to us. The



fact, however, is still a fact, that the brawn side of elocution is to the brain side as a pond is to the Pacific. Mastery of the gymnastic side is within the easy reach of all.

Cultivating the voice, moreover, after the fashion of the tonists is a dangerous thing to do. If cultivated after their fashion, it seldom, if ever, fails to lead to artificiality. Cultivating special tones for this sentiment and for that sentiment, for this passion and for that passion, is fatal. The Murdock school of elocution has done infinite harm. The late Mr. Murdock was not a reader; he was a chanter. Keeping track of the thought in the tones of a sing-singer is bothersome. It is always safe to be direct and honest, subtle Iago to the contrary notwithstanding. The reader that thinks of the tones he makes quickly becomes tiresome.

As we can very well judge of the



grade of a man's culture by noting what he laughs at, so we can very well judge what an elocutionist knows of the art he professes to cultivate by noting what he applauds. At the first meeting of the National Association of Elocutionists, in 1892, a young woman read a selection from Shakespeare, and, as I thought, read badly. To my thinking, there was but one thing in her reading to commend—earnestness—but the earnestness, being unschooled, was but little less than fuss and fury. Yet the two or three hundred experts there assembled applauded rapturously. Had the young woman read well, artistically, naturally, the fury and fuss would have been absent. Would the applause of the experts have been equally rapturous? I doubt it, and I doubt it because I noted what, at that convention, seemed most to please. Soon after the Shakespeare reading, a young woman

of winsome mien read a poem and read it with much intelligence. She seemed simply to have set herself the task of letting her auditors know what it was about, and this she did successfully. Her methods were direct and natural, without any apparent effort to be effective. I heard no one at the convention that pleased me more; but the impression she made on me was very different from the impression she seemed to make on her auditors generally, for they applauded in the most perfunctory manner, and did not call for an encore, as was their habit. Though the young woman was unknown to me I sought her out and said what I could to console her. I have no doubt there were others in the audience—half-a-dozen, perhaps—that thought of the two readings essentially as I did, but the few counted for little among the many. On another occasion, at a re-

ception attended largely, if not wholly, by elocutionists, a young woman read a selection from Shakespeare, and read exceptionally well. Her effort was damned with faint applause; it was plain that she had fired too high for her audience. The next number on the programme chanced to be a young woman from the West, who gave them a broadly humorous character sketch. This, though scarcely within the province of elocutionary art, the audience applauded till the windows rattled.

All of which goes to show that our elocutionists, taken as we find them, do not know good reading from bad. Nor will they ever know good reading from bad until, instead of giving nine parts of their attention to the brawn side of elocution and one part to the brain side, they give nine parts of their attention to the brain side and one part to the brawn side. Indeed, if they will

but properly take care of the brain side, the brawn side will well-nigh take care of itself. Then we shall have elocution that is elocution, and elocutionists that are elocutionists; then, and not till then, will elocution stand with the stage and with the world as it deserves to stand.

THE PAUSE—ITS IMPORT-  
ANCE.

ALL that is necessary in order to read well, is to speak naturally, but naturalness of all things is the most difficult thing to attain. Any one that can draw at all can draw something that would be readily recognized as an attempt to draw the human figure, but to draw the human figure so that it is true to Nature one must be a superb artist.

The most difficult thing to learn in reading is properly to distribute the time, to be deliberate, to pause frequently and naturally. The accomplished reader always takes plenty of time. He that does not, he that hastens, never seems to be master of the

*Not in the Hand*

situation, to have his task well in hand, and consequently he never is as effective as he might be. Nor must this deliberation appear in anything but in the frequency and in the length of the pauses. It must never appear in any drawling or dwelling on the words; they must always come clean-cut and sharply defined. Pausing properly does more than any other one thing to make one's reading natural and realistic. In extemporizing we pause instinctively to give the listener time to comprehend, and to prepare our next thought for presentation.

The most accomplished and painstaking reader does not pause *always* in the same places, but the variation in the places where he pauses, and takes breath, is inconsiderable. Pausing at just such places is not always so imperative as is the putting of the emphasis on certain words; yet the



pausing cannot vary much without materially affecting the delivery, and the points indicated by experts for making the pauses would not differ greatly. It occasionally—not infrequently, perhaps—occurs that the reader pauses simply to take breath, when so far as the sense is concerned it is a matter of indifference whether a pause is made or not. If, however, the breath is well managed, this will occur very rarely. Breathing places, *i. e.* places where the sense demands a pause, are usually abundant. The unskilled reader commonly runs over a large percentage of them. In the interest of force and staying power, the reader should avail himself of every opportunity the construction affords to breathe. Sometimes he should breathe between every word. For example: “Bloody, bawdy villain! Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless vil-

lain!" He should take breath five times in speaking these eight words. Nor is it simply necessary to take breath; the breathing should be full and deep. There is always plenty of time, if the reader knows how to use it. Pausing never makes a reader monotonous and tiresome; but dragging out the words always does.

Being mindful of the fact that an ounce of example is worth a pound of theory, I submit two or three speeches from Shakespeare with the pauses, at the least, approximately indicated. Pauses made with discretion vary, of course, very much in length; some are only momentary, while others may be measured by seconds.

Here is a speech in which certain pauses are as necessary as are any to be found in any passage I can at the moment recall; and yet the majority of the Mercutios I have heard have run

over them without even the suspicion of a halt :

Ha ! ha !—a dream?—O, then—I see !—Queen Mab hath been with you.—She is the fairies' midwife—and she comes—in shape—no bigger than an agate-stone—on the forefinger of an alderman—drawn with a team of little atomies—athwart men's noses—as they lie asleep ;—Her waggon spokes—made of long spinners' legs ;—the cover—of the wings of grasshoppers ;—the traces—of the smallest spider's web ;—the collars—of the moonshine's watery beams ;—her whip—of cricket's bone ;—the lash—of film ;—her waggoner—a small—gray-coated gnat—not half so big—as a round little worm—pricked from the lazy finger of a maid ;—her chariot—is an empty hazel nut—made by the joiner squirrel—or old grub—time out of mind—the fairies' coach-makers.—And in this state—she gallops—night by night—through lovers' brains—and then—they dream on love ;—o'er courtiers' knees—that dream on curtsies straight ;—o'er doctors' fingers—who straight dream on fees ;—o'er ladies' lips—who straight on kisses dream ; sometimes—she gallops o'er a lawyer's nose—and then—dreams he of smelling out a suit ;—and sometimes—comes she with a tithe-pig's tail—tickling a parson—as he lies asleep ;—then—dreams he of another benefice ;—sometime—she driveth o'er a soldier's neck—and then—dreams he of cutting foreign throats ;—of breaches

—ambuscades—Spanish blades—of healths—  
five fathoms deep ;—and then—anon—drums in  
his ears—at which he starts—and wakes ;—and  
being thus frightened—swears a prayer or two—  
and sleeps again.

Hamlet's advice to the Players  
should, I think, be paused substantially  
thus :

Speak the speech—I pray you—as I pronounced  
it to you—trippingly on the tongue—but if you  
mouth it—as many of our players do—I had as  
lieve the town-crier spoke my lines.—Nor do not  
saw the air too much—with your hand—thus—  
but use all gently—for in the very torrent—tem-  
pest—and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion  
—you must acquire—and beget—a temperance  
—that may give it smoothness.—O, it offends  
me to the soul—to hear a robustious—periwig-  
pated fellow—tear a passion to tatters—to very  
rags—to split the ears of the groundlings—who  
—for the most part—are capable of nothing—  
but inexplicable dumb shows—and noise.—I  
would have such a fellow whipped—for o'erdoing  
Termigant—it out-herods Herod.—Pray you—  
avoid it.

Be not too tame—neither—but let your own dis-  
cretion—be your tutor—suit the action—to the  
word—and the word—to the action—with this  
special observance—that you o'erstep not the mod-

esty of nature—for anything so overdone—is from the purpose of playing—whose end—both at the first—and now—was—and is—to hold—as 'twere—the mirror up to nature—to show virtue—her own feature—scorn her own image—and the very age—and body of the time—his form—and pressure.—Now this overdone—or come tardy off—though it makes the unskillful laugh—cannot but make the judicious grieve—the censure of which one—must—in your allowance—o'erweigh a whole theatre of others.—O, there be players—that I have seen play—and heard others praise—and that highly—not to speak it profanely—that neither having the accent of Christian—nor the gait of Christian—pagan—nor man—have so strutted—and bellowed—that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men—and not made them well—they imitated humanity—so abominably.

I hope we have reformed that—indifferently—with us.

O, reform it altogether.—And let those that play your clowns—speak no more than is set down for them—for there be of them—that will themselves laugh—to set on some quantity of barren spectators—to laugh too—though in the meantime—some necessary question of the play—be then to be considered—that's villainous—and shows a most pitiful ambition—in the fool that uses it.

In a few instances, I have left the pause with which we always follow

every strongly emphatic word unmarked. For example, we read: That will themselves—laugh—to set on, etc. I aim not to suggest the elocution of these speeches, but to demonstrate the importance of the pause as a part of elocution.



## STUDIES IN EMPHASIS.

## 1.

To learn to read well is the business of half a life.  
—MACAULAY.

ONE of the chief things to be attended to in reading is to give to the individual words the relative importance requisite to make the thought easy to seize by the listener. He that reads well trips lightly over a large majority of the words. When we in any way give prominence to a word in the utterance we are said to emphasize it. To be convinced that emphasizing properly is important, we have only to reflect that a change of emphasis often changes the meaning of a sentence, or suggests a thought in the context that is not there, If we read:

It becomes

The thronèd monarch *better* than his crown,

we suggest the thought that the context says that "it becomes the thronèd monarch as well as his crown." The sense determined, there cannot be two equally good ways to read. Indeed, the sense determined, there is never but one best way to read, and this best way it is always the reader's duty to find, if he can.

The importance of emphasizing properly can hardly be overestimated. Professor S. H. Clark, in speaking of the importance of being right in emphasizing, says: "One's emphasis is the gauge of one's ability to understand. Whatever else a man may be, he is not a reader if he fails to emphasize correctly. One who emphasizes correctly is more than likely to do justice to his author in other regards. Nothing else betrays our ignorance of the text like bad emphasis. Emphasis means judgment and the judgment that

guides one to discreet and illuminative emphasis is more than likely to lead one to a proper emotional rendering."

In a book recently published, entitled "The Art of Reading and Speaking," by Canon Fleming, Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria, there are some forty pages given up to selections from Shakespeare and Milton with those words italicized that, in the author's judgment, should, in the reading, be emphasized. There are often words emphasized that I should not emphasize, and sometimes there are words un-emphasized that I should emphasize.

It is not probable that the Canon's reading would differ as much from mine as his marking differs from mine. It is often hard to decide, in marking emphasis, whether to italicize a word or not. In such cases, I usually leave the word unitalicized, lest the italicizing

prove misleading. Over-emphasis is something the reader should be careful to avoid, as over-emphasis may easily be carried so far as to bar the effect of the emphases that are properly placed. Though neither the Canon nor I may be right, yet the study of our marking must tend to make the student of the art of reading more painstaking than he otherwise might be.

There are few persons—even on the stage, in the pulpit, or on the rostrum—that have any apprehension of the field that the art of reading offers for the exercise of the intelligence. The art of delivery, of reading, of elocution—call it what you will—affords a field for the display of as much perception as does any one of the other arts. In proof thereof, we have the fact that there are fewer persons that excel in reading than there are that excel in painting or sculpture, not to mention

music, which is the least intellectual of all the arts, if we consider only the making of sweet sounds.

Here are some of the lines in the Canon's book with the changes I would suggest in the marking of them :

1. *Angels and ministers of grace defend us !*
2. Be thou a spirit of *health* or goblin *damned* ;
3. Bring with thee *airs* from *heaven* or *blasts* from  
*hell*,
4. Be thy intents *wicked* or *charitable*,
5. Thou com'st in such a *questionable* shape,
6. That I will *speak* to thee. I'll call thee—*Hamlet*.
7. *King, Father, Royal Dane ! O, answer me,*
8. Let me *not burst* in *ignorance* ; but *tell*
9. *Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,*
10. Have *burst* their *cerements* ; *why* the *sepulchre*,
11. Wherein we saw thee quietly *inurned*,
12. Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
13. To *cast* thee *up* again ! *What* may this *mean*,
14. That *thou, dead corse*, again, in *complete steel*,
15. *Revisit'st* thus the *glimpses* of the *moon*,
16. Making *night hideous* ; and *we, fools* of nature,
17. So *horridly* to *shake* our disposition
18. With thoughts *beyond* the *reaches* of our souls ?
19. Say, *why* is *this* ? *Wherefore* ? *What* should  
*we do* ?

The first seven lines seem to me to



be marked with good discretion till we come to the last word—Why emphasize *me*? There is no question of the Ghost's answering anyone else.

I should not italicize: eighth line, neither *not* nor *tell*; tenth line, *why*; thirteenth line, *cast, what*; fifteenth line, *revisit'st*; sixteenth line, *night*; seventeenth line, *so, shake*; eighteenth line, *beyond*; nineteenth line, *why this*.

I should italicize: eleventh line, *quietly!* sixteenth line, *nature*; eighteenth line, *souls*; nineteenth line, *is*.

In making three syllables of *canonized* and two of *hearsed*, the learned Canon conforms to immemorial usage; the rhythm, however, is greatly bettered by making four syllables of *canonized* and one of *hearsed*. Indeed, this change, with the pause that falls after *bones*, makes the rhythm well-nigh perfect,

Two of Canon Fleming's readings in



the speech above have been defended thus :

In summing up Mr. Ayres says of the seventh line of the speech beginning "Angels and ministers of grace," etc., "Why emphasize *me*? There is no question of the Ghost's answering anyone else."

According to the play there is a very decided question of the Ghost answering some one else. The Ghost first appears twice to Bernardo and Marcellus—they communicate this to Horatio, and upon the occasion of his watch he attempts to speak to the Ghost. Horatio determines to inform Hamlet, for "this spirit dumb to *us* will speak to *him*."

Now when Hamlet is acquainted with the facts of the Ghost's visitations he determines to watch and speak to it though it "blast me."

I should think that Canon Fleming's reading was beautifully correct, because it takes notice of a very trifling detail in the speech, and it rather surprises me that Mr. Ayres should have failed to grasp it.

On that little word *me*, properly emphasized, hangs a great deal of the pathos and power of Hamlet's appeal. In that one word is all this meaning: You have thrice appeared to these soldiers, and once even Horatio had courage to address you, but answer you make not—now it is I, Hamlet, your son, who speaks to you, my father's spirit. "Hamlet, King, *Father*, Royal Dane! O *answer me*."

Again, in the nineteenth line, Mr. Ayres says "I should not italicize *why*, *this*, in 'Say, *why* is *this*!'"



Hamlet makes several distinct interrogations and he sums up :

Say, *why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?*

Canon Fleming's reading is most correct, because by a proper emphasis of *why* and *this*, the full force of the questions asked is made sufficiently impressive. Whereas, if Hamlet had but asked one question, then it seems to me it would have been incorrect to italicize *why* and *this*.

To be sure, the best authorities will always dispute many things in Shakespeare, more especially as to the correct reading of certain passages, but, after all, there can be only one that is really correct.

My reply is :

Mr. Markley's plea for the emphases that he defends is, I think, as strong as it would be possible for anyone to make ; yet it is not strong enough to make me, "on second thought," look upon Canon Fleming's emphasis in the two instances that Mr. Markley defends as being acceptable.

Canon Fleming and Mr. Markley contend for, "O, *answer me*" and "*why is this?*" I contend for, "O, *answer me*" and "Why *is this?*"

The least of my reasons for not emphasizing *me*—which, if emphasized at all, must be made much more emphatic than *answer*—is because the vowel of *me* is the most difficult of all the vowels to make emphatic. This is a consideration that counts for something with the reader. Another reason—which is of somewhat more importance—lies in the fact that far-fetched emphases are always objectionable ; they are likely to divert the auditor's attentions from the matter immediately in hand—a thing that the player, the reader, and the speaker should always study to avoid. But these are reasons of comparatively little weight ; the chief reason, the reason that far outweighs all others for my objecting to Canon Fleming's reading lies in the fact that the learned Canon's reading does not express Hamlet's thought ; does not say what Hamlet wants to say, which is this : Do

not persist in remaining silent. Disclose, make known, what your mission is. Do not let me burst in ignorance, but tell me why you go stalking about when you should lie quietly inurned in your goodly marbled sepulchre. The whole speech shows clearly : ay, most emphatically, that Hamlet's whole being is possessed with the desire to be *answered* and not that he, being the Ghost's son, has claims to consideration that his comrades have not. The thought the Canon's reading expresses has the great demerit of being signally belittling.

As for the other reading—*why is this*—it has not, to my thinking, a peg to stand on. Hamlet asks : What *means* this, what *imports*, what *signifies* this, why *is* this—your going about thus, by the “glimpses of the moon, making night hideous.” O, *answer* me !

## II.

You speak the things you should speak, but you speak them not in the manner they should be spoken.—PLUTARCH.

THE more I study Canon Fleming's marking, the more am I inclined to think that his reading is of the stilted, ponderous sort that tries to get an effect out of every word. Here is a speech of Cassius' (Julius Cæsar, Act I., Sc. 2) in which the learned Canon italicizes double the number of words that, in my judgment, should be emphasized. Take, for example, the line:

*Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.*

Read as here indicated, the utterance is, it seems to me, most monotonous and non-natural, having none of the spirit in it that pervades the entire speech. This is an easy sort of reading. Any one can pound over words in a trip-hammer sort of way, whereas to go



lightly over the unimportant and to dwell on the important words with that appreciative discrimination that makes the thought clear and forcible; that causes the listener to be occupied with the matter rather than with the manner, is never an easy thing to do. The thought, and not the sound, is what enlists and holds the attention of the listener. In the thought there is never any sameness, whereas tones continually recur, hence they quickly pall. The time consumed by the two styles differs but little, but they distribute the time very differently. The one is the style of the brawn elocutionist, the other of the brain elocutionist; the one, of the reader that merely apprehends his author; the other, of the reader that fully comprehends his author. If we read the line I have quoted as it is italicized above, and then read it thus:

*Brutus* will start a spirit as soon as *Cæsar*,



we quickly see, or I greatly err, that by going lightly over three of the words our English author emphasizes, the rendering of the line gains immensely in effect as well as in animation.

Here is the entire speech as the learned Canon marks it:

1. Why, *man*, he doth *bestride* the *narrow world*
2. Like a *Colossus* ; and *we petty men*
3. Walk under his *huge legs*, and *peep* about
4. To find ourselves *dishonorable graves*.
5. Men at *sometime* are *masters* of their *fates* :
6. The *fault*, dear Brutus, is *not* in our *stars*,
7. But in *ourselves* that we are *underlings*
8. *Brutus* and *Cæsar* ! what should be in *that Cæsar* ?
9. *Why* should *that name* be sounded *more* than *yours*
10. *Write* them *together*, *yours* is as *fair* a *name* ;
11. *Sound* them, it doth *become* the *mouth* as *well* ;
12. *Weigh* them, it is as *heavy* ; *conjure* with them
13. *Brutus* will *start* a *spirit* as *soon* as *Cæsar*.
14. *Now* in the *names* of *all* the *gods* at *once*
15. Upon what *meat* does *this* our *Cæsar* feed
16. That he is grown *so great* ? *Age*, thou art *shamed* ;
17. *Rome*, thou hast *lost* the *breed* of *noble bloods*.
18. *When* went there *by* an *age*, since the *great flood*,
19. But it was *famed* with *more* than *one man* ?
20. *When* could *they* say, till *now*, that *talked* of *Rome*,
21. That the *wide walls*, *incompassed* but *one man* ?
22. *Now* is it *Rome* *indeed*, and *room* *enough*,

23. *When* there is in it but *one only man*.  
24. *Oh, you* and *I* have heard our *fathers* say,  
25. There was a *Brutus* once that would have *brook*ed,  
26. The *eternal* *devil* to keep his *state* in *Rome*  
27. As *easily* as a king !

In these twenty-seven lines one hundred and four words are marked for emphasis, fifty more than I should mark. In the first line I should not mark *bestride*, *narrow*, or *world*; nor in the second line *we men*; fifth line, *masters*; sixth line, *dear*, *not*; seventh line, *underlings*; eighth line, *what*, *that*; ninth line, *name*, *more*; tenth line, *write*, *together*, *name*; eleventh line, *become*; thirteenth line, *start*, *spirit*, *soon*; fourteenth line, *now*, *names*, *all*; fifteenth line, *meat*, *this*, *Cæsar*; sixteenth line, *so*; seventeenth line, *lost*, *bloods*; eighteenth line, *by*, *age*; nineteenth line, *famed*, *more*; twentieth line, *when*, *they*, *talked*, *Rome*; twenty-first line, *wide*, *walls*; twenty-third line, *when*, *man*; twenty-fourth line, *oh*, *you*, *I*; twenty-

fifth line, *Brutus, brooked*; twenty-sixth line, *eternal, state, Rome*.

On the other hand, in the third line, I should mark for emphasis the word *about*, as I think it should be made quite as emphatic as the preceding word. I should also mark *feed* in the fifteenth line for emphasis, and *king* in the last line.

Any one desirous to compare the two readings would do well to copy the speech and mark it as I suggest, or to mark it in the printed page.

### III.

The right word in the right place, and the right emphasis on the right word.—DR. RUSH.

As I have already intimated, a great fault, to my thinking, with Canon Fleming's reading is over-emphasizing. This, I think, clearly appears, if we study his marking of the following

scene—the first of the third act of “The Merchant of Venice”:

SHYLOCK.—*How now, Tubal, what news from Genoa? Hast thou found my daughter?*

At the utmost, I should italicize only the words *now*, *Genoa*, and *daughter*. The utterance the Canon, if I understand him, recommends is monotonous and non-natural.

TUBAL.—I often *came* where I *did hear* of her; but *cannot find* her.

Why emphasize *came*, *did* or *cannot*? I fail to see any reason for it. *Hear* and *find* are the only words that should be made specially to stand out.

SHYLOCK.—Why, *there, there, there!* A *diamond gone*—cost me *two thousand ducats* at Frankfort. The *curse never* fell upon our *nation till now*. I *never felt it till now*.

I should not italicize *nation till*. Though it is Shakespeare, the diction, I venture to intimate, is bettered by transposing the words of the next sentence, thus: *Till now, I never felt it.*

This transposition, if I do not err, enables the reader to make the sentence more effective, for the reason that it puts the most emphatic word near the end. No one is invulnerable—no, not even Shakespeare. It is questionable whether *I never* should be italicized; I am inclined to think not.

*Two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels!*

Neither *ducats* nor *jewels* seem to me to be emphatic.

I *would* my daughter were *dead* at my *foot* and the *jewels* in her *ear*. Would she were *hearsed* at my *foot* and the *ducats* in her *coffin*.

There are only four words here that I should mark for emphasis, the first *foot*, *ear*, *hearsed*, and *coffin*. Passion is commonly rapid. Rapidity would be impossible if the reader tarried on all the words our author italicizes.

No *news* of them! Why *so*; and I *know not what's* *spent* in the *search*. Why, thou *loss* upon *loss*!



The first sentence being little else than a wail, an exclamation—a question it is not—I should make as much of *no* as of *news*. *Why so* I should treat in like manner. I should also emphasize the second loss. *Know not* and *spent* I should not emphasize.

The *thief* gone with *so much* and *so much* to *find* the *thief*; and *no satisfaction*, *no revenge*, nor *no ill luck* stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; *no sights* but o' my breathing; *no tears* but o' my shedding!

Nine of the twenty-four words here marked for emphasis I should not emphasize. In the clause: "And so much to find the thief," I should emphasize only one word—*find*. To read it according to the Canon's marking would be to drown it in a sea of sound—a thing that any fellow having a good voice-making apparatus, can do, whether he have any brains or not. I should not emphasize the second *so much*, the second *thief*, the second *no*, *no ill luck*, nor the two succeeding *no*'s.



TUBAL.—Yes, other men have ill luck, too. Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—

I should not emphasize *yes* or *ill-luck*.

SHYLOCK.—What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

TUBAL.—Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

*Argosy* and *Tripolis* seem to me to be the only words that should be made at all prominent.

SHYLOCK.—I thank God; I thank God. Is it true? Is it true?

TUBAL.—I spoke with some of the sailors that 'scaped the wreck.

I should, at the most, mark *sailors* and *wreck* for emphasis.

SHYLOCK.—I thank thee, good Tubal. Good news, good news. Ha, ha! Where? in Genoa?

The only possible reason that I can see for emphasizing the first *good* is insufficient. *News*, both times, and *Genoa* should be made quite as emphatic as any other words in the speech.

TUBAL.—Your daughter spent, in Genoa, as I heard, one night, fourscore ducats.

I should expend neither time nor stress on *spent*, nor should I heed the comma. The reader should always be on his guard against expending his breath where he would get no return for it.

SHYLOCK.—Thou *stick'st a dagger* in me. I shall never see my *gold* again. *Fourscore ducats at a sitting! Fourscore ducats!*

*Stick'st* should surely not be emphasized. I have always read: “Fourscore ducats—at a *sitting?*” having Tubal nod in answer to the question. The clause is commonly treated as an exclamation. My treatment, I think, makes the clause much more effective.

TUBAL.—There *came* divers of Antonio's *creditors* in my company to Venice that *swear* he *cannot* choose *but break*.

At the most, I should mark for emphasis *creditors*, *swear*, and *break*.

SHYLOCK.—I am *very* glad of it. I'll *plague* him; I'll *torture* him; I'm glad of it.

The *very* in the first sentence is a

superfluity. More can be made of the sentence without it than with it. Were I to speak the *very*, I should touch the *glad* comparatively lightly.

TUBAL.—One of them showed me a *ring* that he had of your daughter for a *monkey*.

What a heartless little wretch Jessica is—swap a ring that was a present from her mother to her father for a monkey !

SHYLOCK.—*Out* upon her ! Thou *torturest* me, Tubal. It was my torquoise. I had it of *Leah* when I was a *bachelor*. I would not have *given* it for a *wilderness* of monkeys.

It not being necessary, in order to make the thought clear, to emphasize *given* it is bad technique to make much of it. The skillful reader would touch it lightly in order that *wilderness* might be made to stand out the more boldly ; then he would pause long enough after *it* to take a deep, full breath which he would expend in a burst on *wilderness*, thereby ending one of the best short

speeches ever written with a telling climax.

TUBAL.—But *Antonio* is certainly undone.

SHYLOCK.—Nay *that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our Synagogue, Tubal.*

I should read: "That's *very true*," and "bespeak him a *fortnight* before." As for *if*, I defy all the bellowcutionists in Christendom to find a reason worth a blade of grass for emphasizing it. Not once in a hundred times when we hear this little word mauled is there any reason for treating it other than with the greatest delicacy. Neither *merchandise, meet*, nor *good* should I emphasize, unless I paused after *me* to decide upon the place of meeting—which I always do—then, I should dwell on *meet*. If this treatment was intended by our author, he should have put a dash after *me*.

## IV.

“ If little labor, little are our gains ;  
Man’s fortunes are according to his pains.”

Canon Fleming has given more space in his book to “ The Merchant of Venice ” than to any other of the Shakespeare plays. He begins his marking of the fourth act for emphasis with the Duke’s speech, which he treats thus :

1. Make *room* and let him *stand* before our *face*.
2. Shylock, the *world thinks*, and *I think* so, too,
3. That thou but *lead’st* this *fashion* of thy *malice*
4. To the *last hour* of *act* ; and *then*, ’tis thought,
5. Thou’lt show thy *mercy* and *remorse* more *strange*
6. Than is thy *strange* apparent *cruelty* ;
7. And where thou now *exact’st* the *penalty*—
8. Which is a *pound* of this *poor* merchant’s *flesh*—
9. Thou wilt not only *lose* the *forfeiture*,
10. But, *touched* with *human gentleness* and *love*
11. *Forgive* a *moiety* of the *principal* ;
12. Glancing an eye of *pity* on his *losses*
13. That have, of late, so *huddled* on his *back*
14. Enough to *press* a *royal merchant* down
15. And *pluck* commiseration of his state
16. From *brassy bosoms* and *rough hearts* of *flint*,
17. From *stubborn Turks* and *Tartars* *never* trained

18. To offices of *tender* courtesy,

19. We *all* expect a *gentle answer*, Jew.

Why emphasize *stand*? It's not a question whether the Jew stand or sit; it's a question of the place where he stand.

In the second line, the only emphatic words are *world*, *I*, and *too*.

The third line I should leave unmarked. There is no word in the line that in the reading should be made specially salient.

In the fourth line, I should make *hour* quite as emphatic as the other emphatic words. *Act*, possibly, should be slightly more emphatic than the other words. The reasons, however, would occupy too much space.

In the fifth line, *more* should be touched quite lightly. The thoughtless reader never fails to dwell on it; not because he has a reason for doing so, but because he unconsciously yields



to the beguiling influence of the long *o*, the most sonorous vowel in the language.

The wisdom of marking *loose* in the ninth line is questionable. If at all emphatic, it is only slightly so. The marking is misleading.

The tenth line, read as the Canon marks it, could, it seems to me, not be other than very "preachy." It sounds to my mind's ear, as I look at it, like the delivery of those that, instinctively, endeavor to make up in clatter what they lack in matter. It smacks of the sound-and-fury sort of elocution. The words *touched* and *human* should not be made at all emphatic. The emphasizing of the two words is utterly indefensible.

The emphasizing of *forgive* in the eleventh line is quite natural, and consequently proper, provided the reader employ a persuasive tone; if, however,

the tone be strictly judicial, the word should come in for no emphasis.

In the thirteenth line, I should dwell on *so*, making it, possibly, more emphatic than *huddled*.

There is only one emphatic word in the fourteenth line—*royal*.

The emphasis on *pluck* in the fifteenth line is probably a misprint.

The three following lines I should read essentially thus :

From *brassy bosoms* and *rough hearts* of *flint*  
From stubborn *Turks* and *Tartars* never trained  
To offices of tender *courtesy*.

There is no question of the kind of Turks, or Tartars, or of courtesy, hence the adjectives should not be emphasized. Take the adjectives out and the language loses none of its force. I think I shall not be alone of the opinion that the learned Canon's reading is sometimes rather ill-digested.

The nineteenth line is sometimes

read as marked, and sometimes read without any emphasis on *answer*. Both readings are defensible. I prefer the reading that emphasizes *answer*.

## V.

Proficiency in the art of elocution, as well as in the other arts, is the work of time and labor.—BRONSON.

Canon Fleming continues to indicate the emphasis he thinks will most clearly bring out the thought in the fourth act of "The Merchant of Venice" by marking the lines thus:

1. I have *possessed* your Grace of what I *purpose* ;
2. And by our *holy sabbath* have I *sworn*
3. To *have* the *due* and *forfeit* of my *bond*.
4. If you *deny* it, let the *danger* light
5. Upon your *charter* and your *city's freedom*.
6. You'll *ask* me *why* I rather choose to have
7. A *weight* of *carrion flesh*, than to receive
8. *Three thousand ducats* ; I'll not *answer that* ;
9. But *say* it is my *humor*. Is it *answered* ?
10. *What* if my *house* be *troubled* with a *rat*
11. And I be pleased to give *ten thousand ducats*
12. To have it *baned* ? *What*—are you *answered yet* ?
13. *Some men* there are *love* not a *gaping pig* ;

14. *Some* that are *mad* if they behold a *cat*,
15. *Now* for your *answer*.
16. As there is *no firm* reason to be *rendered*
17. Why *he* cannot *abide* a *gaping* pig,
18. Why *he* a *harmless, necessary* cat.
19. *So* can *I* give *no reason*, nor *will* I not,
20. More than a *lodged* hate, and a certain *loathing*
21. I *bear Antonio* that I follow *thus*
22. A *losing* suit *against* him. Are you *answered*?

To my thinking, *have* in the third line should be touched quite lightly. I can imagine a reader going over the line—as many would—with an elephantine tread, making much of *have*; but such readers are not the sort of readers that take Nature as their model. They are of the sort of readers that—unwittingly, perhaps—seek to get their effects out of the sound of their voices rather than out of the thoughts of their author. Such reading is utterly wanting in movement, snap, action, earnestness; in short, it utterly lacks the natural. It is an easy sort of reading; easy because it does not tax the

intelligence. Many persons of high intelligence read in this manner from habit. It has never occurred to them that there is any other way to read; that if the thoughts were theirs, and the language came to them as they give it utterance they would speak it in an entirely different manner. If such readers chance upon any one whose utterance is true to Nature—particularly if they hear something read that they themselves read—the effect on them, not infrequently, is startling; the exceeding difference in treatment is a revelation to them.

True, *danger* in the fourth line, *city's* in the fifth, *ask* in the sixth, and *weight* in the seventh properly get a little stress, but they, properly, get so little stress compared with the more emphatic words that, in my judgment, it is misleading to mark them. I don't see how a reader could fail to give them

all the prominence they demand. The other words italicized should be spoken with all the unction the reader is master of.

*Not, that* and *say* in the eighth and ninth lines are absolutely unemphatic. Read as marked, how ponderous the second clause of the eighth line is! A great effect may be produced with *humor*, but not if the reader tarries on the word *say*.

In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth lines, there are only five emphatic words—*rat, ten, baned, what, and yet*. All the other words should be spoken rapidly. After *rat*, and before and after *ten*, the reader should pause quite as long as he would after *what* in the twelfth line.

The learned Canon's marking of the thirteenth line is peculiar. According to his reading, there are men that, though they love not gaping pigs, they



do love pigs that do not gap. Neither *love* nor *not* is emphatic, while *pig* is slightly the most emphatic word in the line.

While I should not emphasize *rendered* in the sixteenth line, I should emphasize *reason* very strongly. The defense of the emphasis on *no firm* is easily seen, but to my thinking, it is hardly worth considering. Indeed, these two words are but slightly emphatic.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth lines, I should emphasize *pig* and *cat* very strongly, and should not emphasize *abide*.

In the nineteenth line, I should emphasize neither *so* nor *no*.

I always make two syllables of *lodged*, as to my ear it betters the rhythm. It is always printed, I believe, as one syllable. The fact that if two syllables be made of the word the line has a syl-

lable too many, does not disturb me. Rhythm, smoothness, is the thing that is important.

To my seeing, there is not one emphatic word in the twenty-first line, and only two in the twenty-second—*losing* and *answered*.

If these discussions are *studied*, they will not fail, I think, to interest and benefit many; but, if they are only *read*, they will, I fear, neither interest nor benefit anyone.

## VI.

“The student of the art of delivery never finishes, there is always something left for him to learn.”

Canon Fleming proceeds to mark the emphatic words in the fourth act of “The Merchant of Venice” as follows:

BASSANIO.—This is *no answer*, thou *unfeeling* man, to excuse the current of thy *cruelty*.

I should not emphasize *no*, but I

should emphasize *man* quite as strongly as the adjective *unfeeling*. The two words are equivalent to one single word—*wretch* or *monster*, for example—and consequently should be made about equally emphatic. In such cases, the last word always gets slightly the most stress. If the locution be such that the words may be transposed without affecting the sense, it will be found that the word placed last will always be slightly the most emphatic. Here is an example: “It seems that a law had been recently made that a tax on *old bachelors’ pates* should be laid.” Now, transpose the three italicized words as we will—the pates of old bachelors, the pates of bachelors that are old—and we see that it is always the last word that is naturally somewhat the most emphatic.

SHYLOCK.—I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

Our author marks no word in this speech for emphasis. I have always emphasized *thee* very strongly, and this, possibly, will be considered by most persons the more effective reading; but is it the more correct? That, I am inclined to think, is more than doubtful. Should I ever play the scene again, I think I shall adopt the Canon's reading, speaking the speech in a sneering rather than in an angry tone. Treated in this manner, I should not be surprised to see the speech gain in effectiveness.

BASSANIO.—Do *all* men *kill* the things they do *not* love?

Were there any question of the things men do love, then the emphasis on *not* would be correct, but not otherwise.

SHYLOCK.—*Hates any* man the thing he would *not* kill?

Neither *not* nor *kill* should I empha-

size, but I should emphasize *would* very strongly. The thought is: Does any man hate a thing he would not *like* to kill, and this thought is very clearly brought out by emphasizing *would*. The two last words should be touched very lightly.

BASSANIO.—*Every* offence is not a *hate* at *first*.

SHYLOCK.—*What!* would'st thou have a *serpent* sting thee *twice*?

This reading is bettered, I think, by touching *sting* lightly.

ANTONIO.—I pray you, think, you *question* with a Jew.

The comma after *think* is the Canon's. This reading seems to me utterly bad; it has, so far as I can see, neither rhyme nor reason to defend it. *Jew* is surely the word to emphasize.

You may as well go *stand* upon the *beach*  
And bid the *main* flood bate his usual *height*;

It is not probable that our author would have us make as much of *stand* as the italicizing would intimate.

You may as well use *question* with the *wolf*,  
Why he hath made the *ewe* *bleat* for the *lamb*.

I should not stop for an instant on *question*, and in the second line the only words I should emphasize are *ewe* and *lamb*.

You may as well *forbid* the mountain pines  
To *wag* their *high tops* and to make *no noise*.

Were I to mark these two lines for emphasis, I should probably italicize *mountain pines* and leave the rest to the reader's discretion.

You may as well *do anything most hard*  
As seek to soften *that* (than which *what's harder?*)  
His *Jewish heart*; therefore I do beseech you  
Make *no more offers*, use *no further means*,  
But, with *all brief* and *plain conveniency*,  
Let *me* have *judgment* and the *Jew* his *will*.

Here, to my thinking, is a great deal too much emphasizing. The reading here indicated cannot be other, it seems to me, than heavy, stilted, monotonous—in a word, unnatural. The words I should not em-



phasize are : *do, most, what's therefore, no more, no further and all.*

BASSANIO—For thy *three* thousand ducats here are *six*.

SHYLOCK.—If *ev'ry ducat* in *six thousand* ducats  
Were in *six* parts, and *every* part a *ducat*,  
I would *not* draw them; I would *have* my *bond*.

If Shylock were asked if he would accept, then he would properly, naturally, emphasize the negative, but not otherwise. *Draw*, I take it, is the emphatic word.

## VII.

“The most offensive thing we encounter on the stage is a big voice with little intelligence behind it.”

Our English reader continues his marking of the emphatic words in the fourth act of “The Merchant of Venice” thus:

DUKE.—How shalt thou *hope* for *mercy*, *rend'ring* none?”

If the thought is : How can you expect any mercy, since you render no

mercy? then *thou* and *rend'ring* are properly the emphatic words of the line.

SHYLOCK.—What *judgment* shall I *dread*, doing no *wrong*?

*You* have among you *many* a *purchased slave*,  
Which, like your *asses* and your *dogs* and *mules*,  
You *use* in *abject* and in *slavish* parts,  
Because you *bought* them.

Neither *you* nor *use* should I emphasize; but *parts* I should emphasize quite as strongly as any other word in the sentence.

Shall *I* say to *you*,  
Let them be *free*, marry them to your *heirs*,  
Why *sweat* they under *burdens*?

This reading of the first clause seems to me to be "clean out of the way." Never have I erred more, or *say* is the word, and the only word, to emphasize. The Canon's reading I have often heard, and it may be the traditional reading, but tradition never yet has made anything right. There is no reason, good or bad, for emphasizing

*marry*. The offensive lies not in the marrying, but in the thought of marrying the slaves to the owners' children.

Let their *beds*  
Be *made* as *soft* as *yours*, and let their *palates*  
Be *seasoned* with *such viands*?

Neither *made* nor *seasoned* nor *such* should, so far as I can see, be made the least emphatic. The first *their* I should emphasize as strongly as *beds*, nor should I treat the second *their* as an unemphatic word. It stands in contradistinction to *your* understood; this we clearly see, if we supply the ellipses.

You will answer,  
The *slaves* are *ours*. So do I answer you.

Why emphasize *you*? There is no suggestion that an answer shall, or may, come from anyone else. Here is a typical example of a non-natural, non-intelligent style of reading that is very prevalent. The art in it is on a

level with the art in the sign of the way-side inn. Neither the first *you*, *slaves*, nor *so* should be emphasized.

The *pound* of *flesh* that I *demand* of him  
Is *dearly* bought ; 'tis *mine*, and I *will* have it.

I should not pause an instant on *demand*, nor do I emphasize *will*, though this is the usual, and I believe the traditional, reading. To me, this treatment smacks too strongly of the barking-dog style. Veritable resolve does not waste its strength in loud talk. .

If you *deny* me, *fie* upon your *law* !  
There is *no* force in the *decrees* of *Venice*.  
I *stand* for *judgment* : *answer*, shall I *have* it ?

In these three lines the learned Canon and I would have been of one mind had he not italicized *no* and *decrees*.

DUKE.—Upon *my* power I may *dismiss* this court,  
*Unless* Bellario, a *learnéd* doctor,  
Whom I have *sent* for to *determine* this  
Come here to-day.

To my thinking, the reading here

indicated is about as wide of what it should be as it well could be. There is no question of anybody's else power, hence why emphasize *my*? If there is anything to emphasize in the second line it surely is not *unless* and *learned*; it is rather *Bellario* and *doctor*. I should not emphasize *sent*. Its position in the line brings to it a little more breath than the other words get, *determine* excepted, but it cannot be said to be emphatic.

SALARINO.—My *lord*, here stays without  
A messenger with *letters* from the Doctor,  
New come from *Padua*.

The most emphatic, or rather the only emphatic, word in the first line is *without*. This, I think, clearly appears if we transpose the words thus:

Without, my Lord, there stays a messenger.  
DUKE.—*Bring* us the letters; *call* the messenger.

This is the treatment, I fancy, that this line has commonly received from

time immemorial ; yet I like better the reading that makes well-nigh as much of *letters* and *messenger* as of *bring* and *call*.

BASSANIO.—*Good cheer, Antonio ! What man, courage yet !*

The Jew shall have *my flesh, blood, bones and all*,  
Ere thou shalt *lose* for *me one drop* of blood.

All readers, I think, emphasize *what*. It's not being italicized here is probably due to an oversight. Neither *lose* nor *one* should I emphasize.

ANTONIO.—*I am a tainted wether of the flock  
Meetest for death ; the weakest kind of fruit  
Drops earliest to the ground ; and so let me.  
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,  
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.*

Antonio has no thought here of instituting a comparison between himself and anyone else. There is no such thought, for example, as I am the sickly wether of the flock ; you are the healthy wether of the flock, hence he would not emphasize the qualifying



word. In the first three lines of this speech, I should either not mark any word for emphasis, or I should mark, in addition to the words our author marks, the words *wether*, *fruit*, and *ground*. In neither case should I mark the first word, which, together with *am*, should be tripped over lightly. *Epitaph* rather than *write* is the emphatic word. The line means, live on and epitaph me. If Antonio knew that Bassanio had already composed his epitaph, he would probably emphasize *write*, not otherwise.

## VIII.

One's emphasis is the gauge of one's ability to understand. Nothing else betrays our ignorance of the text like misplaced emphasis. One who emphasizes correctly is more than likely to do justice to his author in other regards. The acumen that guides to a discreet and illuminative emphasis is more than likely to lead to a proper emotional rendering.—*S. H. Clark.*

Canon Fleming goes from where we left him directly to Portia's entrance. He takes an occasional liberty with the text that I fail to see any reason for. I follow him, however, as he proceeds, thus:

DUKE.—Give me your *hand*. You come from *learn'd Bellario*?

PORTIA.—I *do*, my Lord.

DUKE.—You are *welcome*; take your place.

Are you *acquainted* with the cause in *question*?

Marked or unmarked, no one could fail to read the first speech correctly; but why change *old* to *learned*, and why mark the adjective for emphasis?

If “cause in question”—which it will be observed is not Shakespeare—means cause of this action, litigation or suit, then it would seem that *cause*, and not *question*, is the emphatic word.

PORTIA.—I am *informed* *thoroughly* of the *cause*;  
*Which* is the *merchant* here, and *which* the *Jew*?

Of these seven italicized words, I should emphasize only three—thoroughly, merchant, and Jew.

DUKE.—*Antonio* and old *Shylock*, *both* stand *forth*.

PORTIA.—Is your name *Shylock*?

SHYLOCK.—*Shylock* is my name.

PORTIA.—You stand *within* his *danger*, do you *not*?

Emphasize *within* or the second *you* !? I fail to see why.

ANTONIO.—Ay, *so* he *says*.

PORTIA.—Do you *confess* the bond?

ANTONIO.—I *do*.

*So* is unemphatic, as we see if we transpose the words, thus: He says so.

PORTIA.—Then *must* the Jew be *merciful*.

The context might make this the

proper reading; but it doesn't. As the Jew has not already been importuned, so far as Portia knows, the proper reading emphasizes *Jew* and *merciful*. The thought Portia would express is simply this: Since you acknowledge the bond, there is nothing left for you but to throw yourself on the mercy of the Jew.

SHYLOCK.—On what *compulsion must* I? *Tell* me that.

I would not quarrel with this marking, though I should have left *tell* unitalicized. The emphasis on *must* is not necessary to bring out the sense, but, by emphasizing it, Shylock may, if he treats it properly, very forcibly give utterance to the feeling aroused within him by the suggestion that he shall be merciful. Such cases as this are rarely met with. The naked thought nearly always determines.

PORTIA.—The quality of *mercy* is not strained.

I say and, *à la* Meddle, I say it boldly : Nobody reads this line correctly. There is but one emphatic word in it—strained. All the other words should be tripped over quite lightly; yet, all the many Portias I have heard—save one of my own coaching—made at the least two, and usually three, words in the line emphatic. To make any word in the line emphatic but *strained* is to suggest a meaning not intended. The first three words add nothing to the sense, nothing. They are there simply as padding, to fill out the line, or as rhetorical embellishment, yet the majority of readers—good, easy souls! make *quality* quite as emphatic as any other word in the line, and often more emphatic than the word that alone should be emphasized. Strange that so few readers deem it all necessary to think! There is more in the art of

reading than the mere firing of sound at words, few as there are that seem to think so.

If it were anywhere said that mercy is strained, we should properly emphasize *not*, and should not emphasize *strained*.

It *droppeth* as the *gentle rain* from *heaven*·  
Upon the *place* beneath. It is *twice blest* ;  
It *blesseth* him that *gives* and him that *takes*  
'Tis *mightiest* in the *mightiest*. It becomes  
The *thronéd monarch better* than his *crown*.

Not *place*, but *beneath*, is the emphatic word. Take what word we please instead of *beneath*—above, chosen, designated—and we find that it is the limiting, defining word that properly gets the stress. It is only the heavy, monotonous, elephantine style of delivery, which our author would seem to sympathize with, that would dwell on *blesseth*. In the sixth line, *better* is the least and *crown* the most emphatic word. This line usually gives the



learner more trouble than any other line in the whole speech. There are thoughtful readers who contend that *better* is the only emphatic word in the line, but their reasons have always seemed to me quite valueless.

1. His *sceptre* shows the *force* of *temporal* power,
2. The *attribute* to *awe* and *majesty*
3. Wherein doth sit the *dread* and *fear* of kings
4. But *mercy* is *above* this *sceptred* *sway*.
5. It is *enthroned* in the *hearts* of kings ;
6. It is an attribute to *God himself* :
7. And *earthly* power doth *then* show *likest* God's,
8. When *mercy* seasons *justice*.

In the first of these eight lines, *force* is not at all emphatic, nor is *attribute* in the second. In the third line, *kings* is properly slightly more emphatic than either *dread* or *fear*. The thought is made clearer to many by changing *the* to *our*. In the fourth line, not *sway*, but *sceptred*, is the word to emphasize. A little study enables us to see that the sceptre's sway is contrasted with mercy's sway, force

or power; it matters not which word we use. *Enthronéd*, in the fifth line, should be touched very lightly. Its long, sonorous *o* is very beguiling, but it is only the unthinking bowwower, who reads for sound, not sense, that would dwell on it. *It*, whose antecedent is *mercy*, is properly as emphatic as *hearts*. This somewhat more clearly appears if we change *it* to *that*, which, though it be Shakespeare, I do not hesitate to intimate would better the diction. The change would give the reader a much better vowel sound to deal with. In the seventh line, we should trip lightly over *them*, and should emphasize *God's* fully as strongly as *earthly*. This is made clear by supplying the ellipsis, *power*, after *God's*. The sentiment, rather than the sense, makes *seasons* about as emphatic as the words immediately before and after it.

Therefore, Jew,  
Though *justice* be thy *plea*, consider this  
That in the course of *justice* none of us  
Should see *salvation*.

Neither *justice*, *plea*, nor *consider*  
are at all emphatic. The emphatic  
words are *be* and *this*.

We do *pray* for *mercy*,  
And that *same prayer* doth *teach* us all to *render*  
The *deeds* of *mercy*.

Neither *teach* nor *render* should be  
emphasized. *All*, on the contrary,  
should be made very emphatic.

I have spoke *thus much*  
To mitigate the *justice* of thy *plea*,  
Which, if thou *follow*, this *strict* court of Venice  
*Must* needs give *sentence* 'gainst the *merchant* there.

In order to make the words *spoke*  
*thus much* say what they are intended  
to say they must all be spoken with  
equal stress. Spoken as our author  
marks them they suggest the thought  
that something else will be spoken for  
some other purpose. Not infrequent-

ly we hear a Portia emphasize *spoke* and trip over the other two words, intimating that she is going to sing, or chant, or write something else for some other purpose. The one reading is as bad as the other. *Plea* is unemphatic. The comma after *which* is mine. I do not find it in any one of the three editions within my present reach. The clause being parenthetic, the comma seems to me to be necessary. *Strict, court* and *Venice* are equally emphatic. To emphasize *strict* only is to say that there is at the least one other court that is not strict. At the best, *strict* is little else than padding. The line is just as forcible without it; it serves chiefly to fill out the line. So far as sense and force are concerned, one word, *court*, would suffice. In reading the last line the question of climax should be considered. Read for the thought only, the

speech ends tamely. The necessary elevation is attained by dwelling on *needs* and '*gainst* and making a slight pause before and after '*gainst*.

This speech is read in every conceivable manner. The Portias that I have seen, almost without an exception, have gone at it in a pell-mell, haphazard, slapdash way that showed that they depended on their voice-making apparatus rather than on the thought, on vociferation rather than on Shakespeare, for any effect they might produce. They were rewarded with the plaudits of the many; the censure of the few did not concern them, and—they were happy.

## IX.

"He that reads really well utters the words with the care that the musician exercises in playing or singing."

I occasionally meet a person who seems to think that the exercise of the intelligence in reading is fatal to what an actor I met, a day or two ago, called spontaneity, by which I understood him to mean naturalness. He seemed to incline strongly to the opinion that emphasis, pause, and inflection are matters of little importance, and that a reader is likely to be stilted and non-natural in proportion to the extent he allows himself to consider the question of technique. All that is necessary, according to these people, if I understand them, is to know the words and to speak them with earnestness. If they are right, then reading is only a matter of memory and unction; in



other words, of memory and unguided fuss and fury. To these people, who are commonly actors (self-declared), I would say, with as much respect as I can muster for the occasion, that if they would but give half as much time to the learning of their business, as the average chorus-singer or clog-dancer gives to learning his, they might possibly modify their opinion with regard to the value of study. There are many of us that are never more glib, never more confident, never more dogmatic than when we talk about something we know nothing about.

But let us return to Canon Fleming and "The Merchant of Venice":

SHYLOCK.—*My deeds upon my head! I crave [the law]*

*The penalty and forfeit of my bond.*

We all agree, I think, with regard to the meaning of the first sentence, which is this: For my deeds I will be



answerable. Does our author's emphasis make the words express this thought? I think not. His emphasis, to my seeing, makes the words say: My deeds upon my head, and not on any other part of my body. To make the words say what they are intended to say, it is necessary, I am confident, to emphasize the second *my* as strongly as the first, and this, if I do not err, is the way the sentence is usually read. Whether the learned Canon gives us the full line or not, *crave* is not emphatic; it is the thing craved, the law, that we should emphasize. The next line, with its emphatic words, stands in elocutionary apposition to *law*.

PORTIA.—Is he not able to *discharge* the money?

BASSANIO.—Yes, here I *tender* it for him in the *court*!

Yea, *twice* the sum: if *that* will not suffice,  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,  
On forfeit of my *hands*, my *head*, my *feet* [heart].  
If *this* will not suffice, it must appear  
That *malice* bears down truth.

I fail to see any defense for the emphasis on *tender* in the first line, *not* in the second, *not*, *suffice* or *appear* in the fifth, or for *bear* or *down* in the sixth. On the other hand, I should emphasize *sum* in the second line quite as strongly as *twice*. If Bassanio said, for example, I not only tender him the sum we owe him, but twice the sum, our author's emphasis would be correct, not otherwise. In the third line I should emphasize the last three words. The *feet* of the fourth line is a new reading to me. Possibly it is a misprint.

And I beseech you  
Wrest once the law to your authority,  
To do a great right do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

The emphasizing of *wrest* and *once* smacks of the kind of elocution that tries to get an effect out of every word. It reminds one of those speakers that make up in sound for what they lack

in sense. Read in this way, the line loses much of its proper effect. All the words but two should come "trip-  
pingly from the tongue." Why emphasize *this* in the last line? There is no question of any other devil.

PORTIA.—It *must not* be. There is *no power* in  
Venice

Can alter a decree established

'Twill be recorded for a *precedent*,

And many an error, by the *same example*,

Will *rush* into the state. It *can not* be.

The most emphatic word in the first sentence is the last. If it had been said that it must be, then *not* should be the only emphatic word. If it had been said that it cannot be, then *must* would be the only emphatic word. As it is, three words are emphasized about equally in order to give the delivery the elevation that the situation and sentiment demand. For the same reason, *many* and *error* in the fourth line should be emphasized. Neither

*no, power, alter* nor *decree* should be emphasized; *Venice*, on the contrary, should be emphasized quite as strongly as any other word in the speech.

SHYLOCK.—A *Daniel* come to judgment! *Yea*, a *Daniel*!

*O wise young judge! How do I honor thee.*

Of these nine italicized words, I should emphasize only five—*Daniel*, *yea*, *Daniel*, *wise* and *honor*.

PORTIA.—I pray you, let me *look* upon the *bond*.

I should emphasize *pray* quite as strongly as *look*, and should not emphasize *bond*.

SHYLOCK.—*Here 'tis* most *reverend* doctor, *here it is*.

Shylock's eagerness is ill indicated by all this italicizing; and then, read according to the marking, Shylock cannot get the effect out of the word *reverend* that is within his easy reach if he emphasizes this word only.

PORTIA.—*Shylock!* There's *thrice* thy money *offered* thee.

One word only, *thrice*, is all that, in my judgment, should be made at all emphatic in this line. The exclamation point is our author's. I doubt whether it will be found elsewhere. A comma is the usual punctuation.

SHYLOCK.—An *oath*, an *oath*! I have an *oath* in  
heaven :

Shall I lay *perjury* upon my *soul*?

*No*, not for *Venice*.

The effect is weakened, rather than heightened, by making the third *oath* emphatic. I should italicize *not* rather than *no* of the last line. Both words should be spoken with a good deal of force.

PORTIA.—Why, this bond *is* forfeit,

And *lawfully*, by *this* the Jew may *claim*

A *pound* of *flesh* be by him *cut off*

*Nearest* the merchant's *heart*. *Be merciful*.

Take *thrice* thy *money*. Bid me *tear* the *bond*.

In these five lines, our Author would emphasize sixteen words; I should emphasize only nine—*forfeit*,



*lawfully, pound, flesh, nearest, heart, merciful, take, and tear.* "Take thrice thy money, means, simply, *Accept* their offer. Why emphasize *bond* since there is no question of tearing anything else?

SHYLOCK.—When it is *paid* according to the *tenor*.

It doth appear you are a *worthy judge*;

You *know* the law, your exposition

Hath been *most sound*. I *charge* you *by* the law,

Whereof you are a *well deserving pillar*,

*Proceed to judgment*. By my *soul* I *swear*

There is *no power* in the *tongue* of man

To *alter* me. I *stay here* on my *bond*.

In the first line of this speech, a Shylock should not only make clear the fact that the bond must be "paid according to the tenor," but in order to get all the effect out of the line there is in it, he must also emphasize the fact that nothing but a pound of Antonio's flesh will be accepted. This he does best by a peculiar, indescribable handling of the word *according* which results in making it the most emphatic

word in the line. In the third line, I should emphasize *law* as strongly as *know*. If it were a question as to whether Portia does or does not know the law, the case would be very different. If the thought were, for example, you *know* the law but you are not willing to be *guided* by it. In the fourth line I should again emphasize *law*. Our author's reading of the seventh line does not express the thought the line is intended to convey, which is, simply, there is no power in *man* to alter me; the other words serve for little else than for poetical embellishment. The effect of the last sentence is heightened by dwelling on *on* as much as on the two preceding words.

## X.

I hold every man a debtor to his profession from the which, as men do of course seek to receive countenance and profit, so ought they of duty to endeavor themselves, by way of amends, to be a help and ornament thereto.—BACON.

Canon Fleming continues to intimate how he would have the Trial Scene in “The Merchant of Venice” read in this wise :

ANTONIO.—Most *heartily* I do *beseech* the *court*  
To give the *judgment*.

PORTIA.—Why then *thus* it is ;

You must *prepare* your *bosom* for his *knife*.

SHYLOCK.—O *noble* judge ! O *excellent* young man !

To my thinking, our author's reading of these three speeches is much bettered by spending no more breath on the words *beseech*, *court*, and *prepare* than is necessary to articulate them distinctly. I certainly should not emphasize them.

PORTIA.—For the *intent* and *purpose* of the law  
Hath *full* relation to the *penalty*,  
Which here appeareth *due* upon the *bond*.

It would seem to me that *law* is scarcely, if at all, less emphatic than either *intent* or *purpose*. What Shylock has just said about Portia's knowing the law does not effect the reading of the line. *Penalty* should certainly not be made more emphatic than *here* and *appeareth*, hence I should italicize all three or none. The wisdom of marking *bond* for emphasis is questionable. No reader, I think, would fail to give it all the prominence desirable.

SHYLOCK.—'Tis *very* true ! O *wise* and *upright* judge !  
How *much* more *elder* art than thy *looks*.

I should counsel the reader to make quite as much of *true* as of *very*; and, in the second line, I would intimate that I would have him make a great deal more of *much* than of any other word in the line by leaving all the other

words in Roman. All the words, to my thinking, after this one strong emphasis, should be enunciated quite trippingly. Here, as always, I aim only at what I think will heighten the effect. Nature is a niggard and does not expend her energies where she will not be rewarded.

PORTIA.—Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK.—Ay, his breast.

So says the *bond*:—*doth* it not, *noble judge*?

*Nearest his heart. Those are the very words.*

Neither *doth* nor *judge* should I emphasize, but I should emphasize *not*. The long *o* of *noble* makes it possible for the exultant Shylock to voice his joy to the full. No utterance conceivable of *judge* would aid him herein a whit. Why emphasize *those*? If there be a reason, I cannot see it. The *bare* of Portia's line should be emphasized.

PORTIA.—It *is so*. Are there *balance* here to weigh the *flesh*?

SHYLOCK.—I have them *ready*.

PORTIA.—Have by some *surgeon*, Shylock, on *your* charge.

To *stop* his *wounds*, lest he do *bleed* to *death*.

Neither *is*, *flesh*, *stop*, nor *bleed* should I emphasize; and had I marked *your* for emphasis, I should also have marked *charge*.

SHYLOCK.—Is it so *nominated* in the *bond*?

PORTIA.—It is *not* so *expressed*; but what of *that*?

'Twere *good* you do *so* much for *charity*.

SHYLOCK.—I cannot *find* it. 'Tis *not* in the *bond*.

PORTIA.—Come, merchant, have you *anything* to say?

I should not italicize *not*, *good*, or *anything*. *Say*, it seems to me, rather than *anything*, is the word to mark, if one would mark something. Sometimes the line is read with the emphasis on *you*—a reading easily defended.

ANTONIO.—But *little*; I am *armed* and *well* prepared.

Give me your *hand*, Bassanio; *fare* you *well*!

Grieve *not* that I am *fallen* to this for *you*.  
For herein *Fortune* shows herself *more* kind  
Than is her *custom*.



I see no reason for making *fallen* emphatic. If the word were *come*, would anyone think of emphasizing it? *Herein*, to my thinking, is the most emphatic word in the fourth line, unless it be *kind*, which is very much more emphatic than *more*. If we had *as kind* anywhere, then *more kind* would be correct.

It is *still* her *use*

To let the *wretched* man *outlive* his *wealth*,  
To view, with *hollow* eye and *wrinkled* brow,  
An age of poverty ; from which *lingering* penance  
Of such a *misery* doth she *cut* me *off*.

I should italicize neither *use*, *outlive*, *hollow*, *wrinkled*, *lingering*, *misery*, *cut*, nor *off*, but I should italicize *eye*, *brow*, *poverty*, *such*, and *me*. I should hope and expect to get a better result than our author by marking the lines thus :

It is *still* her *use*

To let the *wretched* man *outlive* his *wealth*,  
To view, with *hollow* *eye*, and *wrinkled* *brow*,  
An age of *poverty* ; from which *lingering* penance  
Of *such* a *misery* doth she *cut* *me* *off*.

It is quite safe, I think, to leave the secondary emphases to take care of themselves. I strongly suspect that our author often employs rules in determining what words should be emphasized. If he does, I incline to the opinion that he succeeds no better with them than others have succeeded with them. It is safe to say that the average rule-user goes wrong more frequently than he goes right. The rule of gumption is the only rule that is worth a fig in determining what words should be emphasized

*Commend me to your honorable wife ;  
Tell her the process of Antonio's end ;  
Say how I loved you : speak me fair in death,  
And when the tale is told bid her be judge  
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.*

I question the wisdom of marking any word in the first two of these five lines for emphasis, there being no emphasis that is at all salient. If *honorable*, however, is marked, then *wife*

should also be marked, else we might argue that we have in the reading an intimation that Bassanio is a polygamist. In the third line I should not emphasize *say* or *speak*. By emphasizing *bid* in the fourth line instead of *her*, we spoil the rhythm of an otherwise perfect line. There can be no doubt, I think, that Shakespeare emphasized *her*.

Repent *not* you that you shall *lose* your *friend*,  
And he repents *not* that he *pays* your debt ;  
*For*, if the Jew do *cut* but *deep* enough,  
I'll pay it *instantly* with *all* my *heart*.

Our author's reading of the first three of these four lines seems to me to be very bad indeed. In fact, I don't see how it could easily be worse. The most offensive thing in it is the emphasis on and the pause after *for*. The emphasizing of the *or*'s and *for*'s, and the particles generally, is a characteristic of that species of reader known

in stage parlance as the scene chewer. There is not a syllable in the four lines that should be touched more lightly than the first syllable of the third line. I should read these lines thus :

Repent not *you* that you shall lose your *friend*,  
And *he* repents not that he *pays your debt* ;  
For if the Jew do cut but *deep* enough,  
I'll pay it *instantly* with *all my heart*.

## XI.

“There cannot be two right ways to read a sentence any more than there can be two right solutions to a mathematical problem. There can be only one reading that fully brings out the thought.”

Canon Fleming proceeds, in his “Art of Reading and Speaking,” which he dedicates, “to all who desire to be cultured readers and speakers of our mother tongue,” to mark the emphatic words in the Trial Scene of “The Merchant of Venice” in this wise:

BASSANIO—Antonio, I am married to a *wife*  
Which is as *dear* to me as *life itself* ;

But *life* itself, my *wife*, and *all* the *world*,  
Are *not* with me esteemed *above thy* life;  
I *would* lose all, ay, *sacrifice* them *all*  
Here to *this devil* to deliver *you*.

It is a mistake, it seems to me, to mark *wife* in the first line for emphasis, as I do not think that more should be made of it than of *married*. Not *life* but *itself* in the second line is the emphatic word. Words ending in *self* are used in most cases for emphasis only; they seldom add to the thought. Commonly the word preceding should also be emphasized, but here we have an exception; the emphasis on *itself* suffices. If the *not* in the fourth line contradicted a preceding affirmative, it would be proper to emphasize it. The emphatic words in this line are *esteemed*, *thy*, and *life*. The first of the three, however, may safely be left to take care of itself. Why emphasize *this*? There is no question of any other devil. *Deliver*, not *you*, is the

emphatic word. Put any word we please in the place of *deliver—rescue* or *release*, for example—and we find it naturally gets the emphasis, I should mark this speech thus :

Antonio, I am married to a wife  
Which is as *dear* to me as *life itself*;  
But *life itself*, my *wife*, and all the *world*,  
Are not with me esteemed above *thy life*;  
I would lose *all*, *ay*, sacrifice them *all*,  
Here to this *devil* to *deliver* you.

PORTIA—Your *wife* would give you *little* thanks  
If she were *by* to *hear* you make the *offer*.

Neither *wife*, *little*, nor *hear* should I emphasize, but I should emphasize *thanks*. If we had not the last three words of the second line, *hear* would get the emphasis that now goes to *offer*.

GRATIANO—I have a *wife* whom I *protest* I *love*.  
I *would* she were in *heaven*, so she could  
*Entreat* some power to *change* this *currish Jew*.

In these three lines our author marks ten words for emphasis ; I should mark



six,—the first and the third *I, heaven, change, currish* and *Jew*.

NERISSA.—'Tis *well* you offer it *behind her back*;  
The *wish* would make else an *unquiet home*.

Here again, I should mark only half as many words for emphasis as our author—*back, else* and *home*. *Else*, to my thinking, is the most emphatic word in the speech. With the emphasis on *well* I should not quarrel.

SHYLOCK.—*These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter;*  
*Would any of the stock of Barabbas*  
*Had been her husband rather than a Christian!*  
*We trifle time: I pray thee pursue sentence.*

In the first line I should emphasize neither *husbands* nor *I*. Our author emphasizes *I*, possibly because Bassanio and Gratiano have said they have wives. If this be his reason, which is the only reason I can see, I do not think it sufficient. In the second line, I should not emphasize either *would* or *stock*. Nor in the

third line should I emphasize *husband*. The cæsure, as is frequently the case, makes the word sufficiently prominent.

PORTIA.—A *pound* of that same *merchant's flesh* is *thine*.  
The *court awards* it and the *law* doth *give* it.

SHYLOCK.—Most *rightful judge*.

PORTIA.—And you must cut this *flesh* from off his *breast*:

The *law allows* it and the *court awards* it.

SHYLOCK.—Most *learned judge*! A *sentence*! Come, *prepare*!

In the first line, I should not emphasize *merchant's*; nor in the fourth line, *flesh*. Judge I should not emphasize in either instance; all the emphasis should go to the adjectives.

PORTIA.—1. *Tarry a little*: There is *something else*.

2. This bond—doth give thee here—*no jot* of *blood*;

3. The *words expressly* are a *pound* of *flesh*:

4. Then take thy bond; take thou thy *pound* of *flesh*;

5. But, in the *cutting* it if thou dost *shed*

6. *One drop* of *Christian blood*, thy *lands* and *goods*

7. Are, by the *laws* of Venice, confiscate

8. Unto the state of Venice.

In a foot-note our author says : “ This passage to be read very slowly and deliberately.” Herein I think his dramatic instinct is greatly at fault. Read as he advises, the speech would not produce half its possible effect. Nor would it produce half its possible effect emphasized as he emphasizes it ; it would be wholly wanting in climax, which it is far from wanting if the last two lines are properly spoken.

Neither *little* nor *something* in the first line should have any emphasis whatever ; all the words but *tarry* and *else* should be gone over quite trippingly. Then the first six words of the second line should be spoken in like manner, a pause being made after them of sufficient length to enable the reader to take a full, deep breath, which should be mainly expended on the word *blood*—the turning point in Shylock’s fortunes. In the fourth line,

I should emphasize *take* in both clauses very strongly, but should not emphasize *pound*. In the fifth line, I should ignore the first comma, since observing it retards the movement necessary to produce the effect the speech should, and always will, produce if properly handled. *Shed, one* and *Christian* should not be emphasized. Emphasizing these words takes from the snap, the movement, the earnestness—in a word from the naturalness—of the delivery, which always has been, and forevermore will be, the only legitimate thing to consider in making one's elocution effective. But it is in the last two lines that our author's reading of this speech is singularly weak. He leaves unmarked the two most emphatic words in the whole eight lines, the two words that the skillful Portia specially depends on for her climax, and for the round of applause that she

is sure to get—*confiscate* and *state*. To emphasize *laws* in the seventh line would be to suggest a meaning not intended. The whole clause should be tripped over lightly. Before and after the word *confiscate*, the reader should take a full breath; the first he should expend on *confiscate*, the second almost wholly on *state*. It matters little whether the last two words are heard or not. Here is the way I should mark the speech:

*Tarry* a little; there is something *else*.  
 This bond doth give thee here—no jot of *blood*.  
 The *words expressly* are—a *pound* of *flesh*.  
 Then *take* thy bond; *take* thou thy pound of *flesh*,  
 But in the *cutting* it, if thou dost shed  
 One *drop* of Christian *blood*, thy *lands* and *goods*  
 Are, by the laws of Venice, CONFISCATE—  
 Unto the STATE of Venice.

GRATIANO.—*O upright judge! Mark, Jew! A learned judge.*

To emphasize so much is to emphasize nothing at all. To my thinking,

*upright, mark, and learned* are the only emphatic words.

SHYLOCK.—*Is that the law?*

PORTIA.—*Thyself shall see the act,  
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured  
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou  
desirest.*

I should ignore the comma after *for*, should emphasize *urgest*, should trip lightly over *assured*, and should not emphasize *justice* in the third line. *Urge* and *have* seem to me to stand in direct contradistinction.

GRATIANO.—*O learned judge! Mark, Jew! A learned judge!*

Three words only should I emphasize in this line—*learned, mark, and learned*.

SHYLOCK.—*I take his offer, then: pay the bond thrice,  
And let the Christian go.*

BASSANIO.—*Here is the money.*

I should certainly not emphasize *bond*, nor should I mark anything in Bassanio's speech for emphasis.



PORTIA,—*Soft!*

The Jew shall have *all justice*; soft! *no haste!*

He shall have nothing *but* the *penalty*.

*Nothing*, not *but*, is the word to emphasize in this last line. Indeed *nothing* is the most emphatic word in the speech.

GRATIANO.—O *Jew!* an *upright* judge! a *learnéd* judge!

The two adjectives seem to me to be the only words that should be made at all emphatic.

## XII.

Incorrect emphasis always prevents the sense, and to the hearer it is like directing a traveler in the wrong road.—BRONSON.

PORTIA.—

1. Therefore, *prepare* thee to *cut* off the flesh,
2. *Shed* thou *no blood* ; nor *cut* thou *less* nor *more*,
3. But *just* a *pound* of flesh. If thou tak'st *more*
4. Or *less* than a *just* pound—be it but *so much*
5. As make it *light* or *heavy*, in the *substance*,
6. On the division of the *twentieth part*
7. Of *one* poor *scruple* ; *nay*, if the *scale* do *turn*
8. But in the estimation of a *hair*—
9. Thou *diest* and *all* thy goods are *confiscate*.

If I were to mark any word in the first line of this speech for emphasis, it would be the first. The words our author marks should not, it seems to me, be made at all emphatic. The effect of the comma after *therefore* emphasizes it sufficiently, which was doubtless our author's thought when he left it unitalicized.

In the second line I should emphasize only three words—*blood*, *less*, and *more*. The emphasizing of *shed* and *cut* seems to me utterly indefensible. Here, it seems to me, is as good an example as we could well have of that unreasonable, trip-hammer delivery that has brought the very name of elocution into disfavor. To read after this fashion, a modicum of intelligence and a pair of stilts for the voice are the sum of all that is required.

In the third line, in addition to the words italicized, I should emphasize *flesh*, and that, too, much more strongly than any other word in the line. The reason: Shakespeare, I take it, with the words, "But just a pound of flesh," imposes on Portia the task of making supremely prominent a very important fact that does not appear in the naked words, namely, the fact that this pound of flesh must be made up of flesh only

—no blood, no bone, nothing but flesh. This is the letter of the bond; the spirit of the bond, it is conceded, Portia studiously ignores. Now this thought, which adds greatly to the import and effectiveness of the half dozen words, can only be brought out by a peculiar and very strong emphasis on *flesh*.

In the fourth line, I should not emphasize *just*, *so* or *much*, but I should emphasize *pound*. The word *just*, it will be perceived, can be dispensed with without any loss to the thought or to the effect.

The most emphatic word in the fifth, sixth, and seventh lines is *division*, which, it would seem, our author would not have us emphasize. The thought, if I do not err, is this: "Makes it either light or heavy in the whole, or even in a part, of the twentieth of a scruple," which appears only when *division* is strongly emphasized.

In the seventh and eighth lines, I should not emphasize *scale, turn, but* or *estimation; poor*, however, I should emphasize as strongly as the words before and after it.

There might be something in the context that would justify the emphasis on *all* in the ninth line; as it is, however, the emphatic word is *goods*.

GRATIANO.—A *second Daniel!* A *Daniel, Jew!*  
Now, *infidel*, I have *thee* on the *hip*.

In the first line, I should emphasize neither *second* nor *Jew*. If Gratiano, in the second line, would intimate that the Jew has had his opponents on the hip, which I think is the traditional rendering, he should not emphasize *hip*; if this be not his thought, he should trip over *thee* and emphasize *hip*. In neither case, should both words be emphasized. If Gratiano would taunt Shylock with being an infidel,

the word *infidel* should be emphasized, not otherwise.

PORTIA.—*Why* doth the Jew *pause*? Take thy *forfeiture*.

SHYLOCK.—Give me my *principal* and let me go.

BASSANIO.—I have it *ready* for thee. Here it is.

PORTIA.—He hath *refused* it in the *open court*.

He shall have merely *justice*, and his *bond*.

GRATIANO.—A *Daniel*, still say I ; a second *Daniel*!

I *thank* thee, Jew, for *teaching* me *that word*.

SHYLOCK.—Shall I not have *barely* my *principal*?

PORTIA.—Thou shalt have *nothing* but the *forfeiture*,  
To be *so taken* at *thy peril*, Jew.

SHYLOCK.—Why then, the *Devil* give him *good* of it!  
I'll stay *no longer question*.

My marking of these eight speeches would not differ materially from that of our author. *Why* in the first speech, *that* and *word* in the fifth, and *good* in the last I should, probably, have left unmarked. In marking the emphatic words of prose or verse, it is better to err on the side of marking too few words than on the side of too many. I am by no means sure, for example, that as *devil*, in the last



speech, is so very much more emphatic than any other word in the speech, the italicizing of the one word would not suffice.

PORTIA.

1. *Tarry*, Jew:
2. The law hath *yet another hold* on you.
3. It is *enacted* in the laws of *Venice*,
4. If it be proved against an *alien*,
5. That by *direct* or *indirect attempts*,
6. He *seek* the *life* of any *citizen*.
7. The *party*, 'gainst the which he doth *contrive*,
8. Shall *seize* one *half* his goods: the *other half*
9. Comes to the *privy coffer* of the *state*;
10. And the *offender's life* lies in the *mercy*
11. Of the *Duke only* 'gainst all other *voice*.
12. In which *predicament*, I say, *thou stand'st*.
13. For it appears, by *manifest proceeding*,
14. That, *indirectly*, and *directly too*,
15. Thou hast *contrived* against the very *life*
16. Of the *defendant*, and thou hast *incurred*
17. The *danger* formerly by me *rehearsed*;
18. *Down*, therefore, and *beg* *mercy* of the *Duke*.

In this speech our author emphasizes fifty words. I should emphasize only thirty-two, twenty-nine that he emphasizes and three that he does not emphasize—'*gainst* and *which*,

in the seventh line, and *formerly*, in the seventeenth. I, then, so far as emphasis is concerned, should read the speech essentially thus :

1. *Tarry*, Jew:
2. The law hath yet *another* hold on you.
3. It is enacted in the *laws* of *Venice*,
4. If it be proved against an *alien*,
5. That by *direct* or *indirect* attempts,
6. He seek the life of any *citizen*,
7. The party '*gainst* the *which* he doth *contrive*,
8. Shall seize one *half* his *goods* : the *other* half
9. Comes to to the privy coffer of the *state* ;
10. And the offender's *life* lies in the mercy
11. Of the *Duke* only, '*gainst* all other *voice*.
12. In which predicament, I say, *thou stand'st*.
13. For it appears, by *manifest* *proceeding*,
14. That *indirectly* and *directly* too,
15. Thou hast contrived against the very *life*
16. Of the *defendant*, and thou hast incurred
17. The danger *formerly* by me rehearsed ;
18. *Down*, therefore, and beg *mercy* of the *Duke*.

There is a point of law in this speech, which none of the many Portias I have seen seemed to see. Not even Miss Terry, whom I have seen three times in the part, seems to see

it. If she does see it, she, like the others, fails to make it appear, which, at the least is very good evidence that she does not see it. If we look at the language at all closely, it readily appears that under the Venetian law it was one thing if an alien sought the life of an alien, or a citizen sought the life of a citizen, and quite another thing if an alien sought the life of a citizen. Here, as ever, if one would read well, the first condition is to know what the language means.

It will be seen that in the seventh line, our author emphasizes *party* and that I do not. The thought is brought out, not by emphasizing the noun, but by emphasizing the qualifying, limiting, adjectival clause that follows it. Would anyone think of emphasizing the noun, if we resolve the limiting clause into one word thus: The endangered, or threatened party; or say,

the party threatened? It is really thoughts that we emphasize, not words; and when a clause expresses an emphatic thought, a thought that perhaps might be expressed with a single word, the stress is about equal on the principal words, the last word, usually, if we are true to nature, being made slightly the most prominent. In the reading, *party* becomes quite prominent, not however because we emphasize it, but because of the rhetorical pause that naturally follows it. Our author's comma should not be there; we should not separate nouns from words or clauses that limit or qualify them. The pause after *party* is purely rhetorical.

Students of the art of reading will, I think, find it interesting, and perhaps profitable, to study this speech carefully. Though they may not agree with either Canon Fleming, or

with me, a careful study of the speech should tend to convince them, if not already convinced, that to read well one must do more than simply familiarize one's-self with the words.

## XIII.

If we would read well, we must learn how.—CANON FLEMING.

There are those who think elocution worthless, because they have not studied it; and they will not study it, because they think it worthless.—ALFRED AYRES.

Our English author continues thus :

DUKE.—That thou shalt see the *difference* of *our* spirit  
I *pardon* thee thy *life* before thou *ask* it.  
For *half* thy wealth, it is *Antonio's*;  
The *other half* comes to the *general* state  
Which *humbleness* may drive into a fine.

In the marking of this speech, our author does not appear at his best. Why emphasize *our*? There is no question of difference between any but the Duke and the Jew. The thought

being the difference between us, we have only to emphasize *difference* and *spirit* to bring it out.

In the second line, I see but two emphatic words—*life* and *ask*.

In the third line, I should emphasize *wealth* and *Antonio's*. If a discussion as to what should be done with Shylock's fortune had taken place and this were the resulting decision, our author's emphasis would be correct. Portia simply tells what the law is; no discussion is even suggested.

Why emphasize *general* in the fourth line? There is no question anywhere of any private state. Indeed, *general* adds nothing to the thought; it's used only to pad out the line. Being used, it may be said to coalesce with *state* in expressing what *state* would fully express unaided, and thus come in for a sort of subordinate emphasis; the strong emphasis properly goes to the



noun. I see no reason for emphasizing *half*.

If the Duke means to say in the last line, Which humbleness *may*, POSSIBLY, which I think he does, then *may*, by a good deal, is probably the most emphatic word in the whole speech. I should italicize *fine*.

PORTIA.—Ay, for the *state* ; *not* for Antonio.

In the last clause, *Antonio*, if I do not err, is the word to emphasize.

SHYLOCK.—Nay, *take* my *life* and *all* ; pardon *not* *that* :

You take my *house* when you do take the *prop*  
That doth *sustain* my house ; you take my *life*  
When you do take the *means* whereby I *live*.

The emphasis on *take*, in the first line, is indefensible. If the Duke had said Shylock's life should be taken, Shylock could say, for example, Very well, proceed, *take* my life. As it is, Shylock virtually says this : If you take my goods, take my *life* and *all*.

I should mark the last words of the last line thus: *means—whereby—I—live.*

It is more difficult to realize the possibilities of this speech than it is to realize the possibilities of any other speech in the whole play. It is doubtful whether four lines could be found anywhere that are susceptible of being made more pathetic.

PORTIA.—What *mercy* can *you* render him, Antonio?

GRATIANO.—A halter gratis; *nothing else*, for *Heaven's* sake.

I can see no reason for emphasizing either *mercy* or *nothing*.

ANTONIO.—

1. So please my lord the *Duke* and *all* the court,
2. To quit the fine for *one-half* of his goods,
3. I am *content*, so he will let *me* have
4. The *other half* in use, to render it,
5. Upon his *death* unto the gentleman
6. That lately *stole* his *daughter* ;
7. And that he do *record* a *gift*,
8. Here in the court, of *all* he dies *possessed*
9. Unto his son, *Lorenzo*, and his *daughter*.

True, the Duke is a part of the

court; but that hardly justifies the author's reading. The language means no more than: If it please the Duke and the court, hence *court* and not *all* is the word to emphasize.

I should mark no word for emphasis in the second line, but in reading the line I should always take out *one* and *of*, since with them the line is prose, while without them its rhythm is perfect. Neither thought nor idiom suffers by the omission.

*Half*, in the fourth line; *stole*, in the sixth, and *record*, in the seventh, are words I should not emphasize. If I fully understand what Antonio would say, the adverbial clause, Here in the court, must be emphasized in order to make him say it.

DUKE.—He shall do *this*, or else I do *recant*  
The *pardon* that I late *pronounced* here.

Were I to mark this speech for em-

phasis, I should mark only one word—the first *do*.

PORTIA.—Art thou *contented*, Jew? *What* dost thou say?

SHYLOCK.—*I—am—content.*

PORTIA.—Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHYLOCK.—I *pray* you, give me *leave* to go from *hence*;

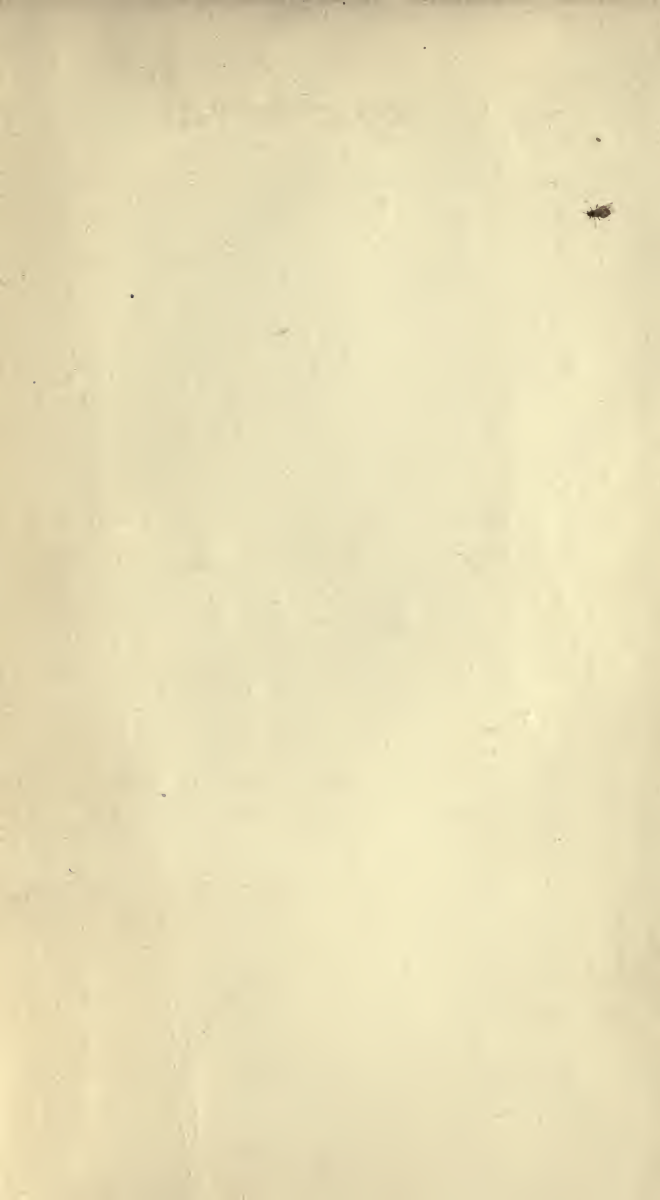
I am not well. Send the deed after me  
And I will sign it.

DUKE.—Get thee *gone*, but do it.

The *what* in Portia's speech is not emphatic; nor does the *leave* in Shylock's speech seem to me to be emphatic. I should read: I am—*not—well*. Then, I should emphasize *after*, *sign*, and *do*.

This is as far as Canon Fleming goes in "The Merchant of Venice," and here I reluctantly take leave of him.





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